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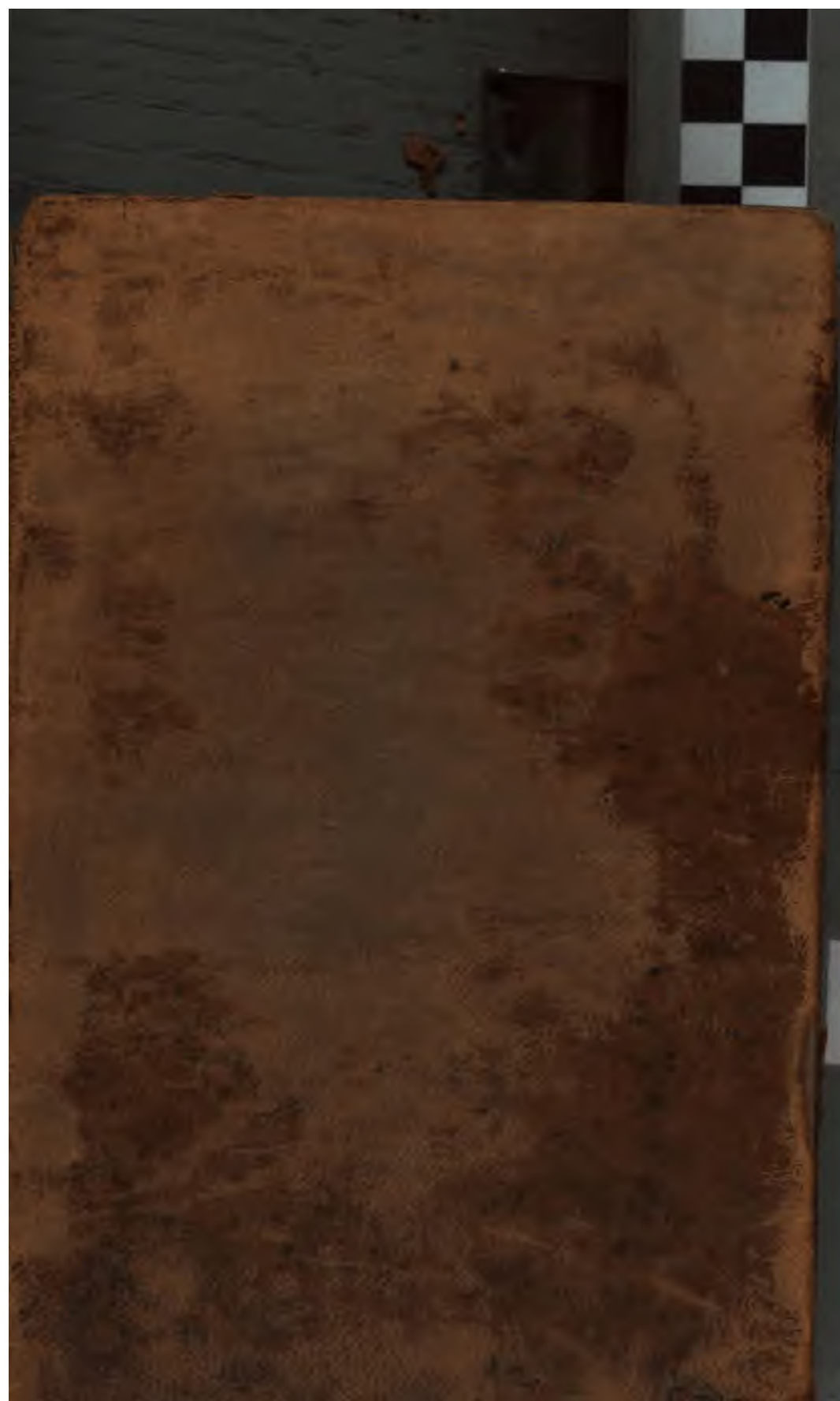
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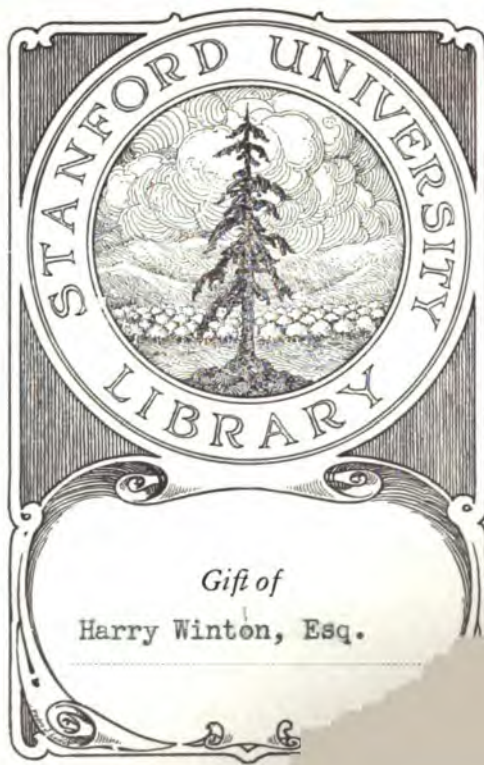
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No. 6,





No. 6.



THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE CHURCH OF THE  
UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

BY JOHN LAWRENCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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## PREFACE.

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UNITED BRETHREN history is, for the most part, a history of spiritual religion in opposition to carnal ecclesiasticism. If the question be asked, what is it that most distinctly marks the history of the Waldenses, the United Brethren, the earlier Mennonites, the Church of the United Brethren, the Renewed United Brethren, and the United Brethren in Christ, it must be answered, *it was the spiritual life which they cherished and diffused abroad.* It was for the religion of the heart,—the religion of the Holy Spirit,—that they turned their backs upon the parade and glitter of great worldly churches, earnestly contended, cheerfully suffered, and bravely died. The same Spirit which was poured out upon the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, made an evangelist of Peter Waldo, endued the Brethren at Lititz with power in 1457, sat upon the lips of Menno Simonis, and fired, with missionary ardor, the builders of Herrnhut. And, about one hundred years ago, a revival, originating in a baptism of the Spirit, was commenced in the heart of a German minister at Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, which has been deepening

and widening ever since; and now, as a result, a church, composed of converted persons, approximating a hundred thousand souls, confesses that the Gospel is, indeed, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." WILLIAM OTTERBEIN, the minister referred to, although but little known to the present generation, had, during the last half of the eighteenth century, and the first decade of the nineteenth, few, if any, superiors in the American pulpit; and, as an evangelist, he has not been excelled in this country. The church to which his evangelical labors, and the labors of the good men who co-operated with him, gave rise—known as the "*United Brethren in Christ*"—although not the smallest member of the Christian family recognized by the common Father, has attracted but little public notice; yet, adhering firmly to the fundamental facts and truths of the Gospel, and zealously proclaiming them, it has been, and is now, adding, every year, no inconsiderable number to the hosts of the redeemed on earth and in heaven. This church has, under its care, an extensive printing establishment, several good institutions of learning, and it supports more than two hundred missionaries. It exists in the Eastern, Middle, Southern, and Western States, in most of the territories, and in Canada; and, in several of the Western States, it is amongst the largest denominations.

It has been very properly remarked, that there are two methods of writing the history of a denomination. One is, to trace the cropping out of its prin-

ciples, through ecclesiastical history, from the time of the New Testament to the present time. Another is, to look for the earliest time when its present organization took its form and shape, and thence trace its progress. I have attempted to combine both these methods; and, in pursuance of this plan, the volume now offered to the public is divided into two parts.

PART FIRST, which is introductory, contains a sketch of the antecedents of the United Brethren in Christ, by which term I refer to those older religious bodies to which our's is related in history, doctrine, spirit, and name. Some account will be found, in this part, of the Renewed United Brethren; of the Mennonites, who are related to the United Brethren; of the Church of the United Brethren; of the primitive United Brethren, and of the Waldenses, from whom the United Brethren descended. A proper understanding and application of the facts noticed in this part of the work, would do something, I think, toward the abatement of that high-church pride which manifests itself in very lofty pretensions, and is wont to scorn the United Brethren in Christ as a "sect," using that term in its most offensive sense. High-churchmen have their antecedents, and the United Brethren in Christ have their's; and, if I have a proper understanding of the facts of history, the latter need not shrink from a comparison with the former.

The SECOND PART contains a history of the rise and progress of the United Brethren in Christ, up to the death of William Otterbein, near the close of



the year 1813. With the death of Boehm, Gue-thing, and Otterbein, properly closes an important period of United Brethren history. A second volume, now in course of preparation for the press, will bring the history down to the present time.

In the preparation of Part First, I have been very materially aided by the excellent history of the United Brethren, written by REV. JOHN HOLMES, and published in London, England, in 1825. It is now, I believe, entirely out of print; but, through the kindness of the Brethren at Bethlehem, Pa., a copy was placed in my hands.

In the preparation of the Second Part, I have drawn largely upon the history of the United Brethren in Christ written by REV. H. G. SPAYTH, and published at Circleville, in 1851. In many cases, I have followed Mr. Spayth's idea closely without using his language; in other cases, I have transferred whole pages, making slight changes in the language. Indeed, Mr. S.'s history is indispensable to a proper understanding of the rise of the United Brethren in Christ; and the Church, in all time to come, will be indebted to him for the most valuable contribution to her early history.

The likeness which accompanies this volume, was obtained from a painting executed for Peter Hoffman, one of the elders of Mr. Otterbein's church in Baltimore.

I submit this work to the public, desiring that it may contribute something to the cause of experimental religion.

JOHN LAWRENCE

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PART FIRST.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE WALDENSES.

UNION with Christ is essential to religious life. This is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. It is distinctly asserted, and impressively illustrated, by the LORD himself, in the parable of the vine and the branches; and it is the central thought in the writings of all the apostles. The most wonderful mystery of the universe,—the mystery which was hid from ages and generations, and into which the angels desired to look,—is solved and summed up in the brief sentence—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

Union with Christ is also the condition of Christian fellowship. That pure, fervent, disinterested love, which is its essence, is a pulsation from the heart of JESUS. They, and they only, who live in Christ, who is the Life,—who walk in Christ, who is the Light,—have fellowship one with another; and, therefore, union with Christ is indispensable to the very existence of a Christian church;



for it will hardly be maintained, by any one, that a Christian church can exist where there is no Christian fellowship.

The PRIMITIVE CHURCH was, without doubt, composed, exclusively, of men and women who had personally renounced all sin, and accepted of Jesus as the only Savior and Mediator. The Gospel came to them, not in word only, but in power; and, therefore, each member of the church could relate a stirring, personal experience, and magnify the grace of God, rejoicing in a happy consciousness of pardon and peace, purity and power, arising from an intimate and endearing union with Christ.\* In a word, it was a living church, united in Christ the living head.

Its worship consisted in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; in reading the Holy Scriptures; in sermons and exhortations; in the relation of Christian experience; and in the celebration, in the simplest

\* Many are the marks which the learned have given us of the true church: but, be that as it will, no man, whether learned or unlearned, can have any mark or proof of his own true church membership, but his being dead unto all sin, and alive unto all righteousness. This can not be more plainly told us than in the words of our Lord, "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin;" but, surely, the servant of sin can not, at the same time, be a living member of Christ's body, or that new creature which dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him.—*William Law*.

possible manner, of the ordinances established by the Lord. It had no stately liturgy, no imposing forms. These were introduced at a later period, when the power of godliness had somewhat declined.

The government of the church was simple as its worship. No one was called Rabbi, Doctor, His Grace, or His Holiness; while all acknowledged the one Divine Lord and Savior. The most perfect equality reigned. Whoever believed the Gospel with the heart, and, with the mouth, made confession unto salvation, was solemnly baptized, immediately received into the church, and recognized as a fellow-citizen of the household of faith. To the rich and the poor, to persons of rank, and to slaves, the endearing and leveling term, "brethren," was applied without distinction. No traces, whatever, of a pompous and lordling hierarchy can be discovered in the constitution of the apostolic church.\*

Simple as this church was in its organization and mode of worship, and little as it possessed of wealth, learning, or any human

\* There reigned among the members of the Christian church, however distinguished by worldly rank and titles, not only an amiable harmony, but also a perfect equality.—*Mosheim: Applegate & Co.'s Ed.* p. 21.

means of success, it proved to be, nevertheless, a moral force, unequalled and irresistible. Into all the accessible and known habitations of the world, the plain and earnest messengers of salvation went abroad, preaching a crucified and risen Savior, making no compromises with evils, giving no quarter to errors, cheerfully enduring all manner of reproaches and persecutions, tortures and deaths; and, every-where, numerous converts were made, and living churches planted. During the first three centuries millions of people, of various and diversified languages and climes, heard and received the glad tidings. Paganism, although honored in thousands of magnificent temples, presiding in all the seats of learning, embalmed in immortal poetry, diffused through every species of literature, interwoven with the social state, and entrenched behind all the civil and military powers of the earth, fell before the onward march of the Gospel; and so gloriously did the light shine forth that the universal reign of righteousness seemed near.

But "the mystery of iniquity," foreseen by the apostle, and delineated with remarkable faithfulness in the glowing pages of the Revelation, began to develop its amazing power



within the ecclesiastical pale itself. The conversion to the Christian faith of the Roman emperor, Constantine, was every-where hailed by the church as an event of great promise to Christianity. Long had the Christians endured every species of wrong and suffering in defense of the Gospel; but now they were promised rest, and nobility began to smile on them. The Christian church became a popular institution. Wealth poured into it. Its original simplicity of worship, doctrine and government, was essentially modified to render it more consonant to the high views of the imperial convert and his court, and more agreeable to the appetites and fashions of a corrupt age. Hence, the chief ministers or bishops were elevated to seats of princely power; lordly ecclesiastical titles were invented and conferred; new doctrines were promulgated, and pagan mysteries were either associated with the simple rites of the Gospel, or substituted in their place. The touching simplicity of worship gave place to an empty ceremonial, pleasing enough to the unspiritual eye, and sufficiently attractive to the carnal mind. The word of God, so long the only authority in all matters of faith and practice, was subordinated to the decisions of



councils, and ceased to be the touchstone of truth. The mild and strict discipline of the apostolic times, was partially or wholly abandoned. The strait gate was widened, the narrow way made broad, for the convenience and comfort of the fashionable, the proud, the ambitious, and even the immoral. The boundaries, marked out by the Lord, between the church and the world, one by one, were removed, until all had at last disappeared.

While this transformation of the popular church was going forward, for it was a work of centuries, the dark ages came on. The Roman empire, which had long been decaying, unable to withstand the powerful assaults of the hardy barbarians with whom it had long warred, and having fulfilled its prophetic destiny, fell. Whole nations of barbarians poured into it from the North, and in the East Mohammedanism arose and began its bloody conquests. Amid the confusion and darkness, the strife and blood, the Man of Sin—the papal hierarchy—grew up with wonderful rapidity, and attained amazing power. Before it kings and emperors bowed in the most slavish submission. The pope, as God, seated himself in the temple of God, and, for ages and ages employed his almost unlimited

civil and ecclesiastical power in the gratification of the worst vices, and in shedding the blood of the saints of the Most High.

But it must not be inferred from the foregoing facts, that the gates of hell had prevailed against the church; for, *the history of a living church, adhering unswervingly to Christ's word, filled with the Spirit, distinguished for all practical virtues, and protesting against all departures from apostolic faith and discipline, is coeval with the history of papal usurpation and depravity.* It is a fact universally admitted, that, during every period of the middle ages, Jesus had numerous witnesses in the dark bosom of the church of Rome itself. But entirely outside of that church, distinct from it, and protesting boldly against it, we find, in every age, vigorous and powerful bodies of Christians, who maintained the doctrine, discipline, and spirit of the apostolic church. Toward this church the anger of Rome never cooled; and the blood of its confessors, however freely poured out, never satiated her cruel thirst.

The most painfully exciting portion of ecclesiastical history is that which describes the extraordinary efforts of the papal power to extirpate the true and only church of Christ

on earth. But the dungeon, scaffold, gibbet, rack, fire, and every instrument of torture which infernal ingenuity could invent, failed to accomplish the desire of that great and malignant power, because Jesus had said,—“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

The Vaudois or Waldenses (Men of the Valleys) existed at a very early period. They have a tradition among them, which is not altogether unworthy of credit, that their fathers, offended at the liberality with which Constantine endowed the church, and especially at the eagerness with which the imperial favors were received by Sylvester and the leading bishops, seceded from the popular church, and organized societies for the promotion of genuine religion, and to keep alive the holy flame of love; and, that they might be less exposed to annoyance and persecution, they retired into Alpine solitudes, where, for a long period, they flourished in comparative quietude. It is evident that the Cathari, or Puritans in the West, who arose in the third century, and the Paulicians in the East, who flourished in the seventh, separated from the prevailing church on account



of its increasing errors of doctrine and practice, and that they agreed, in all essential matters, with the Leonists, Piccards, Albigenes, Vaudois, and Waldenses.\*

Reinerius Sacho, a Romish inquisitor, who was, at one period of his life, a member of the Waldensian church, has left upon record a valuable testimony in relation to the Waldenses. He says:—"Among all sects or religious parties separated from the Romish church, there is not one more dangerous than the Leonists or Waldenses, for the following reasons: first, because this sect is older than any other. It existed, according to some, in the days of pope Sylvester, in the fourth century, and, according to others, even in the days of the apostles. Secondly, because it is widely spread; for there is scarcely a country into which it has not found its way. Thirdly, because, while other sects create disgust by their blasphemous doctrines, this has a great appearance of piety, as its members lead a righteous life before men, believe the truths concerning God and divine things, and retain all the articles of the apostolic faith, *only hating the Romish church and clergy.*"

\* History of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren, by Rev. John Holmes. Printed in London, 1825.



About the year 1160, Peter Waldo, an opulent merchant of Lyons, in France, awakened by a startling providence\* from the sleep of sin, commenced the study of the Holy Scriptures. It was not long before the way of salvation, by faith in Jesus, was made plain to his mind, and verified by a happy experience of sins forgiven. Henceforth he devoted himself and all his possessions to the service of God. With the assistance of some learned men, he translated the four Gospels into the French language. "This was the first translation of any part of the Bible into a modern tongue." He also organized a society for the promotion of religious knowledge, and the circulation of the Scriptures in the language of the common people. Many persons heard and received the glad tidings of salvation from the lips of Waldo; and those living converts were not long separated from their brethren of like faith and experience,—the Vaudois or Waldenses,—in the vallies of Piedmont; and, although known by different names in different countries, their history uniformly flows in one channel.

From the commencement of his evangel-

\* One evening after supper, while enjoying the society of his friends, one of them fell down and instantly expired.

ical labors at Lyons, Waldo was opposed by the Romish ecclesiastics. The leader of the opposition was the archbishop. That a layman should profess a knowledge of sins forgiven, translate and circulate the Scriptures, preach, and awaken the people to a sense of their sins, was an unpardonable offense in the eyes of his grace, the archbishop of Lyons. Hence, stringent measures were adopted to prevent the circulation of the Scriptures, to close the mouth of Waldo, and destroy his influence. "But the purity and simplicity of the religion which" he and his co-laborers "taught, the spotless innocence which shone forth in their actions, and the noble contempt of riches and honors manifested in the whole of their conduct and conversation, appeared so engaging to all such as had any sense of true piety, that the number of their societies increased from day to day."\*

Unable to check the revival, the archbishop appealed for help to the pope of Rome. Alexander III. issued a terrible bull against the heretics, as he affected to regard them. "We, therefore," said he, "subject to a curse both themselves and their defenders and harborers, and, under a curse, we prohibit all

\* Moshier, p. 291.

persons from admitting them into their houses, or receiving them upon their lands, or cherishing them, or exercising any trade with them. \* \* Let them not receive Christian burial." Liberal indulgences were granted to soldiers who should slaughter them without pity; and, to facilitate the work of death, the Inquisition, horribly prominent in later ecclesiastical history, was invented. Deprived of all civil, social, and religious rights and privileges, the poor Waldenses were pursued with unrelenting fury for a period of seventy-three years—from 1180 to 1253. "But such was their invincible fortitude, that neither fire nor sword, nor the most cruel inventions of merciless persecution, could dampen their zeal, or entirely ruin their cause." God was with them, and, in spite of all opposition, the good seed of the word was extensively sown, "an incredible number" of converts were made; and, although every-where proscribed, and "killed all the day long," they stood up for Christ and his word, and bore a testimony against Rome which cast a shadow upon the papal throne itself.

In the early part of the struggle, Peter Waldo was driven from Lyons into Piccardy; thence into Germany; and at last he closed



his evangelical labors and his life among the brave Bohemian mountaineers,—the ancestors of John Huss. After sowing in those mountains the imperishable seed, he died peacefully in 1180.\* Of the fruits of his labors we shall see hereafter.

In relation to the character of the Waldenses, the general purity of their lives and the soundness of their doctrine, we have the most satisfactory proofs. Even those who esteemed it their duty to kill them without pity, bear testimony to the excellence of their lives. Of them St. Bernard says:—"There is a sect which calls itself after no man's name, which pretends to be in the direct line of apostolical succession, and which, rustic and unlearned though it is, contends that the church (Roman Catholic) is wrong, and that itself alone is right. If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian-like; if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless, and what they speak they make good by their actions. \* \* As to life and manners, he (the Waldensian) circumvents no man, overreaches no man, does violence to no man. He fasts much, and eats not the bread of

\* Waddington, p. 356.



idleness, but works with his hands for his support." An inquisitor says of them: "They are orderly and modest in their behavior. They avoid all appearance of pride in dress; they neither indulge in finery of attire, nor are they remarkable for being mean and ragged. They get their living by manual industry. They are not anxious about amassing riches, but content themselves with the necessities of life. Even when they work they either learn or teach."\*

In piety and zeal, in humility and patient endurance for Christ's sake, and in all the elements of a New Testament minister, the WALDENSIAN PREACHERS were the truest representatives and successors of the apostles on earth. They were not lovers of filthy lucre, nor did they aspire to places of power. Raised up from among the working people, and moved to preach by the Holy Ghost, they aimed singly at the glory of God; and such was their interest in the cause, that they thought it no hardship, when necessity required, to earn a part, or the whole, of their support at the loom. Although pre-eminently qualified to "win souls," and to feed the flock of God, they were held in great con-

\* Jones' Church History, Vol. II., p. 64.

tempt by the Romish ecclesiastics; and it was regarded as especially disgraceful that they were "tradesmen." To this the Waldensians usually replied: "We do not think it necessary that our pastors should work for bread. They might be better qualified to instruct us, if we could maintain them without their own labor, but our poverty has no other remedy."\*

In DOCTRINE the Waldenses never swerved from the apostolic teaching. The reader will pardon us for inserting in this place, without abridgment, a confession of faith put forth by this church in 1544. It contains the substance of, and is in perfect concord with, the older confessions; and it is a very clear expression of that truth which was from the beginning, and was never lost nor corrupted by the true church:—

#### CONFESSION.

1. WE believe that there is but one God, who is a Spirit—the Creator of all things—

\* Referring to the reproach cast upon the Waldensian ministry because they were tradesmen, John Milton says: "But our ministers [referring to the English clergy] scorn to use a trade, and count it a reproach of this age that tradesmen preach the Gospel. It were to be wished they were all tradesmen; they would not then, for the want of another trade, make a trade of their preaching: and yet they clamor that tradesmen preach, though they preach, while themselves are the worst tradesmen of all."

the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; who is to be worshiped in spirit and in truth—upon whom we are continually dependent, and to whom we ascribe praise for our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity, and adversity. We love him as the source of all goodness, and reverence him as that sublime being who searcheth the reins and trieth the hearts of the children of men.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and image of the Father—that IN HIM all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, and that BY HIM alone we know the Father. He is our Mediator and Advocate; nor is there any other name given under heaven by which we can be saved. In HIS name alone we call upon the Father, using no other prayers than those contained in the Holy Scriptures, or such as are in substance agreeable thereunto.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, proceeding from the Father and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray; being by him renovated in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.

4. We believe that there is one holy church,



comprising the whole assembly of the elect and faithful, that have existed from the beginning of the world, or that shall be to the end thereof. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the head. It is governed by his word, and guided by his Holy Spirit. In the church it behooves all Christians to have fellowship. For her he (Christ) prays incessantly, and his prayer for it is most acceptable to God, without which, indeed, there could be no salvation.

5. We hold that the ministers of the church should be unblamable both in life and doctrine; and, if found otherwise, that they ought to be deposed from their office, and others substituted in their stead; and that no person ought to presume to take that honor unto himself, but he who was called of God as was Aaron; that the duties of such are to feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre's sake, or as having dominion over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity.

6. We acknowledge that kings, princes, and governors, are appointed and established ministers of God, whom we are bound to obey, [in all lawful and civil concerns]; for they



bear the sword for the defense of the innocent, and the punishment of evil doers; for which reason we are bound to honor them and pay them tribute. From this power and authority no man can exempt himself, as is manifest from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily paid tribute, not taking upon himself any jurisdiction of temporal power.

7. We believe that, in the ordinance of baptism, the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us—namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through [the faith of] Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life.

8. We hold that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of, and thanksgiving for, the benefits which we have received by his sufferings and death; and that it is to be received in faith and love—examining ourselves, that so we may eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures.

9. We maintain that marriage was instituted of God—that it is holy and honorable,

and ought to be forbidden to none, provided there be no obstacle from the divine word.

10. We contend that all those in whom the fear of God dwells, will thereby be led to please him, and to abound in good works [of the Gospel] which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them—which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, sobriety, and the other good works enforced in the Holy Scriptures.

11. On the other hand, we confess that we consider it to be our bounden duty to beware of false teachers, whose object is to divert the minds of men from the true worship of God, and to lead them to place their confidence in the creatures, as well as to depart from the good works of the Gospel, and to regard the inventions of men.

12. We take the Old and New Testament for the rule of our life, and we agree with the general confession of faith contained in [what is usually termed] the apostles' creed.\*

The soundness of their doctrinal views finds expression also in the condemnation which they passed upon the principal errors of the Roman Catholic church. The Centurators of Magdeburg, in their History of the Christian

\* Perrin. See Jones, Vol. II., p. 46.

Church, under the twelfth century, recite from an old manuscript, an epitome of the opinions of the Waldenses of that age; and in relation to the errors referred to, they quote the following from the MS.:

"Masses are impious; and it is madness to say masses for the dead.

"Purgatory is the invention of men; for they who believe go into eternal life; they who believe not, into eternal damnation.

"The invoking and worshipping of dead saints is idolatry.

"The church of Rome is the whore of Babylon.

"We must not obey the pope and bishops, because they are the wolves of the church of Christ.

"The pope hath not the primacy over all the churches of Christ; neither hath he the power of both swords.

"That is the church of Christ, which hears the pure doctrine of Christ, and observes the ordinances instituted by him, in whatever place it exists.

"Vows of celibacy are the inventions of men, and productive of uncleanness.

"So many orders (of the clergy), so many marks of the beast.



"Monkery is a filthy carcass.

"So many superstitious dedications of churches, commemorations of the dead, benedictions of creatures, pilgrimages, so many forced fastings, so many superfluous festivals, those perpetual bellowings, [alluding to the practice of chanting,] and the observations of various other ceremonies, manifestly obstructing the teaching and learning of the word, are diabolical inventions."

As the Waldenses wrote but few books, being distinguished more for their deeds than for their words, some portions of their history are involved in obscurity, and the principal part of what we have has been preserved in the writings of their adversaries; yet enough of it has come down to our times to satisfy the enlightened enquirer that, from the rise of popery to the fifteenth century, they constituted by far the purest church of Christ on earth, and, in fact, the only considerable body which can be regarded as a true Christian church. Their numbers in Europe, during the early part of the fourteenth century, were computed at eight hundred thousand. They were most numerous in France, Italy and Piedmont; and they collected large congregations in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary.

## CHAPTER II.

## UNITED BRETHREN.

WHILE the Waldenses in France, and in the countries adjacent which had submitted entirely to the papal yoke, were passing through scenes of persecution, the bare recital of which chills the blood; and while the evangelical fire, which had burned for many centuries so brightly upon their altars, seemed about to be quenched in blood, God was preparing a way for his people in another country, where the light of salvation began to shine forth upon the surrounding darkness.

Christianity had been introduced into Bohemia and Moravia, from the East; but those countries, having, by conquest, been added to the western empire, the Roman pontiffs exerted all the power of both their swords to subject them to the papal yoke. This, however, proved to be a most difficult task. After a struggle of a hundred years, a brave Bohemian king sent a deputation to pope

Gregory VII., asking a confirmation of the religious liberties of Bohemia, and, especially, that divine worship might be performed in the language of the common people. To this very reasonable request, the arrogant pontiff replied by a bull which reads as follows:—

“Gregory, bishop and servant of the servants of God, sends greeting and benediction to the Bohemian prince Wrastislas. Your highness desires that we should give permission to your people to conduct their church service according to the old Sclavonian ritual. But know, my dear son, that we can by no means grant this your request; for, having frequently searched the Holy Scriptures, we have discovered that it hath pleased Almighty God to direct his worship to be conducted in a hidden language, that not every one, especially the simple, should understand it. For, if it were to be performed in a manner altogether intelligible, it might easily be exposed to contempt and disgust; or, if imperfectly understood by half-learned persons, it might happen that, by hearing and contemplating the word too frequently, error might be engendered in the hearts of the people, which would not be easily eradicated. Let no one pretend to quote, as a precedent, that formerly



exceptions were in favor of new converts and simple souls. True it is that, in the primitive church, much was conceded to upright and well-meaning people; but much injury and many heresies were thereby created: insomuch that, when the Christian church spread more and more, and became better grounded, it was plainly perceived that, from the root of such ill-timed indulgence, many errors had sprouted up, which it required great labor and pains to stop. Therefore, what your people ignorantly require can in no wise be conceded to them: *and we now forbid it, by the power of God, and his holy APOSTLE PETER*, and exhort you, for the sake of the honor of Almighty God, that you oppose such levity of sentiment by every possible means, in conformity to this our command."

This audacious document was issued in 1079, and its publication was followed by the infliction of the most relentless cruelties upon those who continued to pray and praise God in their own tongue, and to protest against image and saint worship, purgatory, and kindred Romish inventions. Many churches were closed, great numbers were despoiled of their possessions, and others were put to death.

Thus passed another century, and yet large numbers of the inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia openly or secretly resisted the claims of Romanism, and sighed for deliverance from its heavy yoke, and for a pure religion.

About this time some Waldenses, flying from their persecutors, found their way into Bohemia. Peter Waldo, as we have seen in a previous chapter, there closed his evangelical labors and his life in 1180; and, about that period, many other Waldenses found among the same honest, liberty-loving people, a temporary home and refuge. Carrying with them into this, as into every place whither they were dispersed, the uncorrupted word of God, they found a soil well prepared for its reception; and an abundant harvest was the result. It has been ascertained, from a reliable source, that, in 1315, the Waldenses numbered, in Bohemia, and in the country of Passau, eighty thousand members; and that, thirty-five years later, they had two hundred churches in Bohemia alone. When we take into account the tyranny under which they lived, the strictness of their discipline, and, especially, the fact that they received and retained in their communion only such persons as gave evidence of a renewed heart,

these statistics indicate remarkable religious prosperity.

Early in the fifteenth century a series of events occurred in Bohemia, interesting in themselves, and important in their influences upon the church of God, which resulted in the organization of the church of the *United Brethren*—a church which possessed the pure theology and sound evangelical life of the Waldenses; and which must be regarded, indeed, as a part of the same church under a different name. To these events we will now call attention.

JOHN HUSS, the most prominent actor in the great religious drama of the fifteenth century, was born in a small village in Bohemia, in 1373. He studied at Prague, and was appointed Professor of Theology in that University. Through the liberality of a wealthy citizen, a church, called Bethlehem, was erected in Prague, where the Gospel was to be freely dispensed to all the people in both the German and Bohemian languages. Huss was appointed preacher, and, in 1402 he commenced his public ministry. Previous to that time the writings of Wickliffe,—the “Morning Star of the Reformation,”—had been extensively read in Bohemia; and, al-



though Huss could not subscribe to all the views of the English reformer, he revered him as a great religious teacher, and his mind was so far enlightened that he rested his faith upon the word of God alone, and was made savingly acquainted with Christ. His eloquent, bold, and evangelical sermons were attended by throngs of hearers.

But during the first year of Huss' public ministry, pope Alexander V. issued a bull condemning the doctrines and writings of Wickliffe, and forbidding all persons to receive or promulgate them; and the archbishop of Prague caused upwards of two hundred costly-bound volumes of the proscribed books to be publicly burned in the streets of the city. Against this act, as also against many other crimes and corruptions of the papacy, the eloquent preacher of the Bethlehem church lifted up his voice. He was soon summoned to appear before the pope at Bologna, but, refusing to answer, was excommunicated and cursed, and Prague was laid under interdict. Huss appealed from the pope to God; and, enjoying the protection of the royal family, and being supported by the enlightened masses of the people, he was in little immediate danger. Meantime he saw in a

clearer light the abominations of Romanism, and condemned them in stronger and more emphatic terms.

In 1414, the celebrated Council of Constance was convened, and Huss was summoned to appear before it. That he might do so without personal risk, a safe conduct, which pledged the word and honor of the emperor Sigismund, was furnished him. As soon, however, as he had reached Constance, he was thrust into a loathsome prison, and even chained to the floor. No regard whatever was paid to the safe conduct. The forms of a brutal trial were passed through, at the close of which the pious, learned, and eloquent preacher, in the prime of his days, was led out of the city and burned to ashes, and his ashes were cast into the Rhine! Nobly did he stand up for Jesus in the Council, and in the flames. The year following, his dear, manly friend, Jerome of Prague, was condemned to die by the same Council; and, at the stake he also witnessed a glorious confession for Christ.

These high-handed measures excited great sorrow and indignation in Bohemia. The nobility and the University united in a remonstrance to the Council, complaining of the

murder of Huss as a wrong and an insult to the whole nation. Disdaining to reply, the Council issued a circular, calling upon the friends of the church in Bohemia to aid in exterminating all heretics; and wherever a Hussite could be seized, he was thrown into prison, drowned, burned, or "cast into the deep shafts of the mines near Huttenberg." As an illustration of the spirit and practice of the Romish church, a single incident, selected from numerous heart-rending details, may be noticed: "An upright clergyman, after suffering many cruelties, was, together with three farmers and four boys, placed on a pile of wood. Being once more exhorted to abjure all heresy, the clergyman replied,—'God forbid! We would, if it were possible, endure death not only once, but a hundred times, rather than deny the truth of the Gospel, solemnly revealed in the Bible.' While the fire was kindling, the clergyman, clasping the children in his arms, began a hymn of praise, in which all joined till they were suffocated by the flames."\*

The Council of Constance was convened in 1414, and was not dissolved until 1418. It settled the dispute between the rival popes,

\* Holmes' History, U. B. p. 18.



burned Huss and Jerome, condemned the memory of Wickliffe, and ordered that his bones be dug up and cast upon a dunghill; but nothing was done to conciliate the aggrieved and excited Bohemians. On the contrary, two years later, pope Martin V. issued an edict accusing the adherents of Huss "of the most damnable heresies, and calling upon emperors, kings and princes, *for the sake of the wounds of Jesus, and their own eternal salvation*, to assist in their extirpation."

This virtual declaration of war by the pontiff, backed by the emperor, involved the country in a terrible civil conflict, which raged for a period of thirteen years. The Bohemians, under the leadership of the courageous Count John Ziska, who regarded himself as "the sword of the Lord," successfully resisted, and, at length, repelled their enemies, and obtained complete control of the whole country. The emperor, at length, sent proposals of peace, but the brave leader of the Bohemians died while on his way to the conference. The war was again renewed, and continued for a number of years longer, under the leadership of Procop.

By far the greater portion of those who took up arms in this bloody contest under-

stood but imperfectly the true principles and spirit of the religion which is on earth peace and good will to men, and they desired only a few very superficial reforms. They were known as *Calixtines*. Hence, in 1431, a council which assembled at Basle, made such concessions as were satisfactory to a very large majority of them; and, after making peace with the Pope, they turned their arms against the *Taborites*, who, on no terms, would yield to that ecclesiastical despot. As an inevitable result of this treaty, the latter were totally defeated; but the *Calixtines*, who had compromised with Rome and aided in the overthrow of the *Taborites*, were deceived in their expectations, "as the pope, in the sequel, totally disannulled the Bohemian compact." The prince of darkness is always proposing compromises with religious bodies, and he seldom, if ever, fails to outwit them in the end, and disappoint all their hopes. The cause of true religion has never gained any thing from compromises or compacts with sinners or sinful institutions.

A half century had passed since Huss commenced his reformatory labors,—a half century of persecution, strife and blood,—during which time the cause of vital religion had

attracted but little attention in Bohemia. In the year 1457, however, "some of the stricter Hussites, purer Calixtines, scattered and peeled Taborites, and Waldenses," organized a society on the confines of Moravia and Silesia, at Lititz. They took the law of Christ for their guide, and the primitive church for their model. "They called themselves *Brethren* and *Sisters*; and assumed the general appellation of FRATRES LEGIS CHRISTI, i. e., BRETHREN OF THE LAW OF CHRIST. But, as this appellation was liable to be misunderstood, and convey the idea of a new monastic order, they exchanged it for that of FRATRES, (*Brethren*), and, after many persons of similar religious views, in different parts of Bohemia, had joined their union, they adopted the name of UNITAS FRATRUM, i. e. *the Unity of the Brethren*, or *the United Brethren*, and this name has ever since been retained."\* They adopted, as fundamental, the doctrine of the Waldenses and of Huss, "that the New Testament supplied the only infallible rule" for the constitution of a church; and "that all regulations not enjoined by the word of God, or fairly deducible from it, were to be viewed as mere matters of expediency, and might be

\* Holmes, p. 44.



altered according to circumstances;" and they unanimously resolved, "*To suffer all for conscience sake, and not to use arms in defense of religion, but to seek protection from the violence of enemies, by prayer to God, and by dispassionate remonstrance.*" This resolution was never, in a single instance, violated.

For the space of three years they enjoyed peace; and the word of the Lord was spread abroad, and religious societies formed in many parts of Bohemia and Moravia. Then persecution fell to their lot. They were condemned as incorrigible heretics. Some of them were put upon the rack; and the greater portion of them were driven from their homes, and compelled to seek refuge in the deep recesses of mountains. Yet they persevered and prospered. Synods were frequently held in dark forests, where every precaution was necessary to prevent discovery.

At a synod or conference held in 1467, it was, upon mature deliberation, resolved that they would elect their own ministers from their own body; and that, in doing so, they would, in every case, seek immediate divine direction. Three brethren were accordingly chosen, and joyfully received as pastors and

teachers, and the right hand and kiss of peace were extended to them.

"The Brethren, however, soon found that the work was not yet complete. In their own estimation the appointment of those men for the ministry of the Gospel, in the manner described, was sufficiently valid; but they knew it required something more to give it equal sanction with the religious public. They required regular ecclesiastical ordination. In order to discuss this important subject, another synod was convened before the end of the year. In this assembly, two questions were principally agitated.

"The first was, whether ordination by a number of Presbyters was equally valid with that performed by a bishop? The decision of the synod was to this effect:—That Presbyterian ordination was consonant to apostolic practice, (1 Tim. 4: 14,) and the usage of the primitive fathers; consequently the newly elected ministers might be ordained by those now exercising the sacred functions of the Gospel among them. \* \* But as, for many ages, no ordination had been deemed valid in the reigning church, unless performed by a bishop, they resolved to use every possible means for obtaining episcopal ordination; that

their enemies might thus be deprived of every pretext for discrediting the ministry among them.\*"

Accordingly, as soon as opportunity occurred, three United Brethren ministers,—one of whom had been a Romish priest, another a Calixtine clergyman, and the third a Waldensian preacher,—were sent into Austria, to a Waldensian bishop, named Stephen, by whom they were joyfully received, and, with the assistance of another bishop, ordained.

Shortly after this period a proposition was made, and favorably entertained, for a complete union of the Waldenses and United Brethren, who, in doctrine, discipline, and spirit, were essentially the same; but this proposition becoming known, the ever-vigilant church of Rome excited against the Waldenses a bloody persecution, by which large numbers of them were put to death in the most cruel manner; and, among many others, Stephen, their last surviving bishop, was burnt. Many of the refugees found an asylum among the United Brethren, and became identified with them.

From 1468 up to the era of the great reformation, the Brethren enjoyed but few

\* Holmes Hist. United Brethren, pp. 51, 52.



seasons of respite from persecution. In the year above mentioned an edict was issued by the diet of Prague, "enjoining the different states to use their best endeavors for apprehending as many of the Brethren as they could, *leaving it optional with them to do with them what they pleased.*" The scenes of distress which followed this edict baffle description. All the prisons in Bohemia were quickly crowded with Brethren. Many perished with hunger. Those who escaped had, as on former occasions, to conceal themselves in the forests and caves, where they often endured extreme misery.\* This persecution continued, with little abatement, for three years, when a mild and benevolent monarch succeeded to the throne, and they had a season of rest, which was well employed in the dissemination of the good seed, and in building each other up in the holy faith.

In 1474 a deputation was sent out, consisting of four prominent Brethren, with instructions "to make inquiry into the general state of Christendom, in order to discover whether there existed any where Christian congregations, who were free from popish errors, and lived conformably to the rule of Christ and

\* Holmes, pp. 54, 55.

his apostles, that they might form a union with them." Having travelled separately, and by different routes, "through Greece and Dalmatia, visited Constantinople and Thrace, and several provinces of Russia and Sclavonia, and penetrated into Egypt and Palestine, they returned, after an absence of some years, and brought their brethren the melancholy intelligence that they had no where found what they had sought, and that nominal Christendom every-where seemed to be sunk in error, superstition and profligacy."\* A similar deputation travelled through France and Italy, in 1486, which was fortunate to discover, here and there, "some upright souls, who secretly sighed over the prevailing abominations." "They likewise witnessed the burning of several noble confessors for the truth," but they found in neither of those countries "a church with which they could unite;" and at a synod held in 1489, they unanimously adopted the following resolution: "That if it should please God, in any country, to raise up sincere teachers and reformers, in the church, they would make common cause with them."†

What a dark and mournful picture is here

\* Holmes, p. 63.

† Ibid.

presented of the nominally Christian world, a few years prior to the reformation. There were, at that very period, in parts of Europe not visited by those deputations, Christians of the primitive stamp, to whom we shall refer in a succeeding chapter, who, like the Brethren, were sowing in tears, and moistening the good seed freely with their blood, patiently waiting for the long-expected harvest.

It ought to be mentioned that, in 1470, the United Brethren "published at Venice the first known translation of the whole Bible into any European language. The sale of the sacred volume, hitherto unknown, was so rapid, that in a short time two new editions were printed at Nuremburg. The Brethren afterwards established three printing offices at Prague and Buntzlau, in Bohemia, and at Kralitz, in Moravia, which, for some time, were solely occupied in printing Bohemian Bibles."\*

The reformation, which was commenced in 1517, by Dr. Martin Luther, was hailed with joy by the United Brethren, who had not forgotten the prophetic words of Huss, addressed to his judges as he was going to the stake,—"*A hundred years hence you shall answer this to God and me;*" and in 1522 they sent a

\* Holmes, p. 63.



deputation to the great reformer, "to present him with the sincere gratulations of their whole body; to express the cordial interest they took in his labors, and the lively joy they felt at the success with which it pleased God to crown his exertions, and to give him a faithful account of their doctrine and constitution. They were very cordially received, and Luther frankly informed them that his former prejudices against them had now been removed. The following year a letter was sent, which represented to him the necessity of combining scriptural discipline and Christian practice with sound doctrine." Luther replied—"With us things are not sufficiently ripe for introducing such holy exercises, both in doctrine and practice, as we hear is the case with you. Our cause is still in a state of immaturity, and proceeds slowly; but do you pray for us."\*

After waiting for some time, and seeing little hope of the introduction of a scriptural discipline into the reformed churches, a second deputation was sent to Luther, from the Brethren, "urging the necessity of strict discipline, and complaining of the tardy manner in which this subject was pursued." This

\* Holmes, p. 93, 94.

message was not so kindly received, and, for a short period, the communication between the reformer and the Brethren was interrupted. However, in 1532, the Brethren transmitted to him a copy of their confession of faith, which pleased him so well that he published it with a preface from his own pen, in which he said:—"While I was a papist, my zeal for religion made me cordially hate the Brethren, and consequently likewise the writings of Huss. \* \* \* But since God hath discovered to me the son of perdition I think otherwise, and am constrained to honor those as saints and martyrs, whom the pope condemned and murdered as heretics, for they have died for the truth of their testimony. To these I reckon the Brethren, commonly called Piccards, for among them I have found what I deem a great wonder, and what is not to be met with in the whole extent of popedom, namely, that, setting aside all human traditions, they exercise themselves day and night in the law of the Lord; and though they are not as great proficient in Hebrew and Greek as some others, yet they are well skilled in the Holy Scripture, have made experience of its

doctrines, and teach them with clearness and accuracy."

From this period onward to the death of Luther, in 1546, the good understanding between him and the Brethren continued without interruption. "Since the days of the apostles," wrote Luther, "there has existed no church, which, in her doctrine and rites, has more nearly approximated to the spirit of that age, than the Bohemian Brethren. Although they do not exceed us in purity of doctrine, \* \* yet they far excel us in the observance of regular discipline, whereby they blessedly rule their congregations, and in this respect they are more deserving of praise than we. This we must concede to them for the honor of God and the sake of truth; for our German people will not bend under the yoke of discipline."

Others of the reformers spoke of the Brethren in terms of the most profound respect and affection. Bucer addressed them a letter, in which he said: "It is the inmost wish of my heart, that you may never lose the precious gift you have received from God, but may rather, by your example, excite us to attain to the same, for you are at present the only people in Christendom, to whom



God hath given, not only sound doctrine, but also a pure, scriptural church-discipline, convenient and salutary, not painful but profitable." "John Calvin likewise cultivated a friendly intercourse with the Brethren, and embodied several of their regulations in the constitution framed by him for the church at Geneva.\*

But the distracted state of Europe during the thirty years' war, which was commenced by Charles V. against the Protestants, in 1546, involved the Brethren in the greatest troubles, and finally consummated their total dispersion and disorganization.

In some instances, during this period, the reformed churches, which knew not the spirit of Luther, persecuted them in the true Romish spirit. At one time they were required to relinquish their own church constitution, or quit Prussia, which was at that time a Protestant state. Some Lutheran and Reformed divines were the instigators of this decree.

The great majority of the Brethren preferred to quit the country, and some returned to Moravia, while a large number of them found a refuge in Poland, where the doctrines

\* Holmes, Vol. I, p. 99.

of the reformation had been propagated with success by some Swiss ministers. A friendly correspondence between the Brethren and the Reformed congregations resulted in the formation of friendly union, "consummated on the express condition, however, that the two churches should have separate places of public worship." At the close of the synod where this alliance was formed, the delegates gave each other the right hand of fellowship, and together celebrated the Lord's supper. John Calvin wrote to Poland concerning this union, to some of the reformed, as follows:—"From your agreement with the Waldenses (so he calls the Brethren), I hope much good will accrue; not only because God does always bless the communion of his saints, the members of the body of Christ, but also, because I believe that the experience of the Waldenses, who have been long tried in the Lord's service, will be very profitable to you in the beginning of the Christian warfare." In the following century all remains of dissension were removed in the synods holden at Ostrog, in the years 1620 and 1627; and the two churches were formed into one under the title—**THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN.**\*

\* Mosheim, p. 482.

This was the second church organization which took the name of "United Brethren."

To trace the history of the United Brethren from 1564 to 1648, would lead us beyond the limits allowed in this work. Many passages of their history, during that period, possess unusual interest. Seasons of rest and prosperity were brief, while storms of persecution were frequent and protracted. In 1627 all their property in Bohemia and Moravia was confiscated, and all their churches and schools closed forever. Every Bible and Protestant book that could be found was burned. The Brethren were, of course, scattered over Europe, in all directions.

The treaty of peace concluded at Westphalia, at the close of the thirty years' war, between the Catholics and Protestants, made no mention of the Brethren, and all hope of their reorganization in Bohemia and Moravia vanished. The learned and devoted John Amos Comenius, who had eloquently urged a recognition of their claims by the civil powers, after the treaty was concluded, published a pamphlet, in which he gave a most affecting description of the condition of his people.

"We ought, indeed," he said, "patiently



to bear the wrath of the Almighty; but will those be able to justify their conduct before God, whose duty it was to make common cause with *all* Protestants, but who, unmindful of former solemn compacts, have not come to the help of those who suffer oppression while promoting the common cause? Having procured peace for themselves, they never gave it a thought that the Bohemians and Moravians, who were the first opponents of popery, and maintained the contest for centuries, deserved to be partners in the privileges obtained, at least in so far as to prevent the extinction of Gospel light in Bohemia, which they were the first to kindle and set on a candlestick. Yet this extinction has now actually taken place. This distressed people, therefore, which, on account of its faithful adherence to the apostolic doctrine and practice of the primitive church, is now universally hated and persecuted, and even forsaken by its former associates, finding no mercy from man, has nothing left but to implore the aid of the eternally merciful Lord God, and to exclaim with his oppressed people of old: "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the Comforter that should relieve my soul is far

from me. But thou, O Lord, remainest forever; thy throne is from generation to generation. Wherefore dost thou forget us forever; and forsake us for so long time? Bring us back unto Thee, O Lord, that we may return to the land of our nativity; renew our days as of old.”\*

A few general remarks touching the doctrine, discipline and usages of the primitive United Brethren, and we must dismiss them, reluctantly, indeed, from farther notice.

In doctrine they agreed with the Waldenses, one of whose confessions we have already inserted at length.†

By reference to page 50, it will be seen that they regarded but one order of ministers as of divine appointment. As a matter of *expediency*, they had bishops, or superintendents; and, it is a remarkable fact, “that, of fifty bishops, who for two centuries had the oversight of the church, no one was deposed.”

In the selection of ministers, they chose “men of acknowledged piety, well versed in the Scriptures, of sound natural understanding, ‘apt to teach,’ unimpeachable in moral conduct, and enjoying the esteem and confi-

\* Holmes, Vol. I., p. 130.

† Page 31.

dence of their brethren," but few of whom had received a classical or scientific education. After the reformation, they established three colleges of their own, and their ministers were more liberally educated. But "they laid greater stress on piety, moral conduct, and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, in persons sustaining the pastoral office, than on human learning; for, as small as their community was, they had made the melancholy experience, that a more enlarged acquaintance with literature and philosophy had, in some instances, paralyzed the zeal of ministers in promoting the edification of their flocks, and, by the false gloss of heathen philosophy, obscured the bright purity of Christian doctrine, which derives all its luster from Christ crucified."\*

"The head of every family was required to send his children diligently to church, to instruct them at home in the truths of the Gospel, and to meet them in family devotion three times a day,—in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

"The frequenting of theaters, and worldly amusements, of public houses, (without absolute necessity) and all places of idle resort,

\* Holmes, vol. 1 p.



was strictly forbidden. Not only open vices, but vanity and immodesty in dress, licentious discourse, all "improper intimacy between the sexes, and clandestine courtships, were severely censured. All dishonest traffic and usury were prohibited. None were allowed to engage in a lawsuit without first endeavoring to settle their differences by brotherly arbitration.

"The ministers derived their income from the voluntary contributions of their respective congregations, consisting either in money or provisions. In Poland, small farms, besides a garden, were generally attached to their dwellings. Nor were they ashamed to earn something by the labor of their hands, when their congregations were poor, and they could spare the time from their pastoral duties; \* \* care was taken, however, that such employments did not trench on the hours which ought to be devoted to study. Whenever a minister's yearly income amounted to more than \$200, he was exhorted to spend the overplus in charity. They were enjoined not to assume pompous titles, but to set the greatest value on the name of brother.

"They attached the greatest sanctity to the

*Sunday*, considering the sanctification of one day in seven not as a Mosaic enactment, but as forming a part of the moral law, and, consequently, of perpetual obligation, the first day of the week, emphatically designated the Lord's day, being substituted in place of the Jewish Sabbath.

"Their churches were unadorned, fitted up with plain seats, or forms, the men and women sitting apart. They do not appear to have used any prescribed form of prayer, or instrumental music in their worship. But they delighted in vocal music; the whole congregation joined in the singing led by a precentor."\*

\* For a complete account of the doctrine, discipline, and peculiarities of the United Brethren, the reader is referred to Holmes, vol. 1, from which most of the above facts have been gleaned.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE MENNONITES.

THE Waldenses, as we have seen in a previous chapter, were, at different periods of their history during the Middle Ages, dispersed into every country of Europe where they could find temporary succor, or a home. But the object of their dispersion and inhuman treatment by the papal church, was totally defeated; because, like the church dispersed from Jerusalem, "they went everywhere preaching the word." Some of the rich fruits of their labors in Bohemia, Moravia, and Poland, have already been noticed in our sketch of the primitive United Brethren. But we should do injustice to our subject, and to one of the most respected antecedents of the United Brethren in Christ, did we omit to mention the MENNONITES.

It has been well observed by Mosheim, that, "before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed, in all the countries of



Europe, \* \* \* many persons who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine, which the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites, had maintained, some in a more disguised, and others in a more open and public manner, viz.: 'That the kingdom of Christ, or the visible church which he established upon earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought, therefore, to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors.' \*"

A very large number of those persons, who walked closely with God, amid the general darkness which preceded and, too soon, alas! followed the reformation, are known in history as Mennonites,—a name which they derived from a distinguished convert from Romanism, who, while Europe, led by the reformers, was struggling for emancipation from papal despotism, collected thousands of them into a single fold.

That the church might be a holy church, separate from the world, that the simplicity of its original constitution might be restored,

\* Mosheim, p. 491.

and that the Christian character, as exhibited in the conduct and manners of the professed servants of God, "might recover its lost dignity and luster," were the objects of the never-failing hope, and unceasing prayers and labors, of the Mennonites,—as it was also of the Waldenses and primitive United Brethren.

MENNO SIMONIS, the remarkable man who was the honored instrument, in the hand of providence, of gathering, into a well-organized body, the people who are called after his name, was born in Friesland, in 1505. He was trained up for the clerical office in the Roman Catholic church; but, soon after he entered upon his duties as a priest, he was induced to apply himself diligently to the study of the Scriptures, by which means he was evangelically enlightened and converted. Immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood, but began to preach the Gospel of Christ according to the New Testament, and to expose the sins of Rome. Soon his life was in great peril; but, nothing daunted, he cast in his lot with the scattered and bleeding people of the Lord, before referred to, who, at this period, were literally "killed all the day long," by both

Catholics and Protestants, on account of the excesses of some miserable fanatics at Munster and elsewhere, with whom they were obstinately, and, it is feared, maliciously, identified in the public mind.

"From this period to the end of his life, that is during a space of twenty-five years, he traveled from one country to another, exercising his ministry under a series of pressures and calamities of various kinds, and constantly in danger of falling a victim to the severity of the laws."\* He proclaimed the Gospel faithfully, and with evangelical power and effectiveness, in east and west Friesland, the province of Groningen, Holland, Brabant, Guilderland, Westphalia, the German provinces on the shores of the Baltic, and Livonia.

He was a man of learning, genius, eloquence, courage, and indefatigable perseverance. His prudence never failed him in the most trying periods. In doctrine, he was sound; in piety, sincere; and his zeal for Christ was a pure and quenchless flame. In a word, he was a missionary who counted not his life dear unto him, that he might win Christ.

\* Moshier, p. 494.



Under his powerful influence, great numbers of the Lord's scattered sheep were gathered into a well-organized church, whose doctrine and discipline were a nearer approach to those of the primitive church than those adopted by any of his cotemporary reformers.

Menno and his brethren would gladly have united with the reformers; but, as had been the case with the United Brethren,\* the want of Gospel discipline in the reformed churches, was an insurmountable obstacle to union. Menno had an interview with Luther and Melancthon at Wittenberg, with Buling at Zurich, and at Strasburg with Bucer; but, such was the intolerance of the times, that he was unable to secure to his long-suffering brethren the free exercise of their religion even in the Protestant states.

After a life of noble self-sacrifice for Jesus, such as few men have lived, this apostolic minister and model missionary found a quiet retreat, and a peaceful death-bed, "at the country seat of a nobleman, who, moved with compassion at a view of the perils to which he was exposed, and the snares that were daily laid for his ruin,

\* See page 55.

took him in and gave him an asylum." He died in 1561.

The doctrines of the Mennonites were usually expressed, in their confessions of faith, in the exact words of the Holy Scriptures; and they are not tainted with the popish leaven which, unhappily, was retained in that noble symbol, the Augsburg Confession, nor with the acute and erroneous speculations of the great Genevan.\* A summary of those doctrines, printed in various languages in 1632, affords a clear view of all the fundamental doctrines of the word, and contains very few points to which the slightest objections can be taken. On the subject of experimental religion, this summary is very explicit. Article VI. says—"Neither baptism, supper, church, nor any other outward ceremony, can, without faith, regeneration, change or reformation of life, enable us to please God. But we must go to God with sincere hearts, and true and perfect

\* The Romish leaven, in the old symbolic books of the Lutheran church, in Europe, has been rejected by the most influential body of Lutherans in America. An able writer, in the *Lutheran Observer*, specifies the following errors found in those books:—"Ceremonies of the Mass; Exorcism; Private Confession and Absolution; Denial of the Divine institution of the Christian Sabbath; Baptismal Regeneration; Real Presence in the Eucharist, and the special sin-forgiving power of the Lord's Supper."

faith, and believe on Jesus Christ, according to the testimony of the Scriptures. By this living faith, we obtain remission or forgiveness of sins, are justified,—nay, made children of God, partakers of his image, nature, and mind, being born again through the incorruptible seed."

The Mennonites would not take an oath, would not go to law, nor bear arms. They were remarkable for industry, honesty, meekness, plainness of dress and manners, and general inoffensiveness of conduct; and, yet, few churches can count a greater number of martyrs. The Duke of Alva, that bloodthirsty Spaniard, slaughtered these poor sheep of Christ without pity, during his rule of terror in the Netherlands; but it was in those countries that they first obtained complete toleration. William, Prince of Orange, "the glorious founder of Belgic liberty," bore an honorable tribute to the excellence of their character as citizens; and, in spite of the most obstinate opposition from doctors of theology of the reformed faith, he secured to them legal protection.

But, in many countries of Europe, they have always been a proscribed people. At the close of the thirty years' war, great



numbers of them emigrated to America, and found homes in Lancaster, and adjacent counties, in Pennsylvania, where, in the providence of God, they became associated with the rise of the United Brethren in Christ.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE RENEWED UNITED BRETHREN.

THE number of enlightened Christians, in various parts of Europe, who, before the rise of Luther, adhered unswervingly to the doctrine and discipline of the church which Christ had established, was very great; and the unblenching testimony which they bore against popery, the evangelical light which they dispersed abroad by their preaching and the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and the remarkable heroism displayed by so many thousands while suffering a cruel death, did far more to render the papal power odious, and, to prepare the public mind to respond to the voice of the reformers, than is generally supposed.

Cardinal Hosius, president of the Council of Trent, perceived, in the reformation, a result of "the leprosy," as he termed it, "of the Waldenses," which had "spread its infection throughout all Bohemia;" and Land-

anus, Catholic bishop of Ghent, in a defense of Romanism, written as early as 1560, speaks of John Calvin as the "inheritor of the doctrine of the Waldenses."

But the reformation, marked and glorious as were the blessings which it secured to mankind, and terrible as was the blow which it gave to the great papal tyranny, failed to mold the churches to which it gave birth, according to the apostolic pattern. As seen in a previous chapter,\* this great error was early perceived by the United Brethren, and others, and deplored by the reformers; but it was never corrected. Hence, although the light of God's own word broke forth like the rising sun, and millions of people were suddenly emancipated from Romish errors and tyranny; yet, after all, it is a sad fact that the masses simply exchanged one formal religion for another,—Romanism for Protestantism,—and continued to live "without God in the world." A few, compared with the whole number who embraced the Protestant faith, were inwardly enlightened and truly converted.

The discipline of the reformed churches was extremely defective; indeed, it can hardly

\* See page 55.



be asserted that they had any thing approximating the discipline of the church of Christ. All who professed the Protestant faith, and conformed to certain easy forms, were recognized as members of the church; and that relation was maintained through life, although there might be no evidence of piety,—nay, although the proofs of impiety, and even immorality, might be notorious. All grades of sinners, and, at length, all classes of unbelievers, filled the churches, occupied the pulpits, and surrounded the communion tables. The church and state were also united—a thing which can never be done without a plain violation of our Lord's commands, and the infliction of unutterable injuries upon the cause of true religion. "Protestant persecuted Protestant; dissensions and disputes on idle questions, or on subjects of minor importance, engaged the attention of all; the religion of the heart was neglected, and the fruits of the blessed reformation (which at first gave such fair promise) were nearly blasted. Men loved their creeds, but not God; they adhered to orthodoxy, but not to the Savior of repenting sinners. For creeds, oceans of human blood were shed, countries laid waste, cities destroyed, and their in

habitants reduced to poverty and want. This was especially the case in Germany. Rulers frequently changed their creeds; and, having done so, they demanded their subjects to follow their example."\*

It is admitted on all hands, that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the state of religion in the reformed churches was deplorable indeed. But at that very period, the work of God, in the hearts of men, was promoted with great zeal and success, by the pure and spiritual Mennonites, who, as already seen, could not unite with the reformed churches, on account of the worldly elements which became incorporated with them. And, in this dark hour, the blessed Lord caused a reformation of vital religion to break forth in the bosom of the reformed churches, through the instrumentality of the PIETISTS, the salutary effects of which have reached our times, and exerted no inconsiderable influence upon United Brethren history.

PHILIP JAMES SPENER, who, under God, was the leader in this revival, was born in Upper Alsace, France, in 1635. He

\* History of the American Lutheran Church, by Dr. Hazelius, p. 21.

commenced his public ministry soon after the peace of Westphalia had "given rest to distracted, and well nigh ruined Europe." He was a converted man, and devoted himself unintermittingly to the promotion of heartfelt, personal religion. Wherever he preached, a wide-spread religious concern was awakened, and great numbers began to inquire what they must do to be saved. To aid inquirers, to confirm and strengthen young converts, and to promote the good work generally, Bible meetings and prayer-meetings were held in private houses and in public halls, to which multitudes of the people flocked. It is believed that not less than forty thousand persons were converted to Christ through the instrumentality of this distinguished man. He died in Berlin, in 1705, happy in the Lord.

The Pietists "laid it down as an essential maxim, that none should be admitted into the ministry but those who, in addition to other qualifications, had hearts filled with divine love." Strange to say, this was regarded as a very unreasonable, and even wicked maxim! They also maintained that the divine influence was necessary to a



right understanding of the Scriptures. "Another thing which gave great offense was, that they renounced the vain amusements of the world. Thus, dancing, pantomimes, public sports, theatrical diversions, the reading of humorous and comical books, with several other kinds of pleasure and entertainment, were prohibited by them, as unlawful and unseemly; and, therefore, by no means of an indifferent nature." These views gave great offense to the worldly-minded, pleasure-seeking church members of that period. But the most objectionable of all the views advanced by the Pietists was this, that no man was properly qualified for the sacred office of the ministry who was not himself a truly pious man! The carnal clergy were enraged at the simple enunciation of the doctrine!

Had the Pietists not been persecuted and resisted by the churches of which they were the salt; and had the leaven of godliness which they diffused, not been neutralized by a blinded clergy and state; and, on the contrary, had the revival which they promoted been encouraged throughout Germany, how vastly different would have been the religious condition of that great country

this day! As it is, no Christian country on the globe more needs the evangelical missionary, animated by the spirit of Spener and Franke, than Germany. The land which has been hallowed by the blood of thousands and thousands of martyrs, is overspread with a thick mantle of spiritual darkness. But the good leaven of the Gospel disseminated by the Pietists, still works in the Lutheran church, especially in America; and in other directions its healthful influence has been felt. In the *renewal* of the United Brethren church, under the supervision of Zinzendorf, it performed important service, as we shall see presently.

After the total extinction of religious liberty in Bohemia and Moravia, in the early part of the seventeenth century, the United Brethren remained in a state of great depression for nearly a century. They were never, however, extirpated; and, in the early part of the eighteenth century, God, who had not been inattentive to their plaintive cries, nor insensible to their grievous bondage, came to their relief, broke their prison doors, and sent them forth as messengers of salvation to a lost world. At about the same time in 1715, a revival of religion

broke out among a remnant of Brethren who still remained in Moravia and Bohemia, although there had been no communication between them. But, finding themselves hedged in on every side, denied all religious privileges, and completely at the mercy of their unfeeling and powerful enemies, they humbly besought the Lord for some asylum to which they might fly for protection. This was provided for them, through the agency of Christian David, on the estate of a pious young German nobleman, in Upper Lusatia, in 1722.

Christian David was raised a Roman Catholic, employed in youth as a shepherd, and afterward put to the trade of a carpenter. While working as an apprentice in Holeschau, he became acquainted with one of the scattered remnants of God's people, who, although they were confined in a cellar, by the authorities, were engaged, day and night, in singing and prayer. These people were the means of arresting him in his evil ways, and, finding a Bible, he read it, until his mind was fully enlightened, and his heart was filled with joy and peace in believing. He now determined to join the Lutheran church, and, that he might do so



with safety, he traveled to Berlin, where he was admitted to the Lord's Supper. But, "observing that the generality of Lutherans led very careless and even wicked lives, and that any individual earnestly seeking the salvation of his soul, was exposed to taunts and reproach, he resolved to enlist as a soldier, fancying that he would have more leisure in that state to attend to spiritual things." In this he was, of course, disappointed. After his discharge from the army, and return to his occupation as a carpenter, he was induced, by the persecutions to which he was exposed, to remove into Upper Lusatia, where he became acquainted with some pious Lutheran preachers, and with Count Zinzendorf. After he had become settled, he was moved to make frequent journeys into Moravia, to preach the Gospel to such of his fellow-countrymen as he might in safety reach. During these journeys, he became acquainted with some of the United Brethren, who were as sheep without a shepherd, and, in 1722, succeeded in leading a little band of them out of their prison house to the estate of Count Zinzendorf, in Upper Lusatia. Not desiring to settle in the village on the

estate, they went into the forest, about two miles from Berthelsdorf, and on a hill, called *Hutburg*, they commenced to build HERRNHUT,—a name which has a “double signification, and may be translated either *the object of the Lord’s protection*, or *the watch of the Lord*, the place where his servants stand waiting to receive, and ready to execute his commands.”\*

NICHOLAS LEWIS, COUNT ZINZENDORF, on whose estate Herrnhut was built, and who is so intimately associated with the renewal of the United Brethren church, was born at Dresden, in A. D. 1700. When an infant six weeks old, he was carried, by his nurse, into the presence of his dying father, who said to him, “My dear son, they ask me to bless you, but you are more blessed than I am; though even now I feel as if I were already standing before the throne of Jesus.” His mother marrying again, young Zinzendorf was placed under the care of his grandmother, Madame von Gersdorf, an elect lady, at whose house the godly Spener was a frequent guest. It is also a fact worthy of record, that a daily prayer-meeting—a thing then regarded as an ex-

\* Holmes, vol. 1, p. 169.

hibition of fanaticism bordering on lunacy—was maintained at Madame Gersdorf's residence.

Under the genial spiritual influences of his grandmother's home, the susceptible nature of young Zinzendorf, at a very early period, became thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of Jesus. At Halle, also, where he was placed at school in his tenth year, he advanced rapidly in the knowledge and love of God. At the house of the celebrated Franke, co-laborer of Spener, lessons of holiness were indelibly imprinted upon his memory. Some of his noble friends, displeased with his zeal and devotedness to the Lord, had him removed, in his seventeenth year, to Wittenberg. But no circumstances with which he was surrounded, no worldly employments with which his time was engrossed, ever caused his love to grow cold, or, in the slightest degree, abated his ardor, or dampened his glowing zeal. After he had reached his majority, he was induced, by his friends, to accept of an important office under the government, the duties of which he discharged, with conscientious fidelity, for a period of about eleven years. During this term of



public official life, he was very busily employed in advancing true religion by every practicable means; and on his estate, in Upper Lusatia, God was preparing an humble people, with whom he was soon to become fully identified in the great work of saving sinners. The liberality of his heart had prompted him to offer a retreat to the United Brethren refugees and exiles from Moravia and Bohemia. Returning home, after an absence of some time, his attention was attracted by the rude house erected in the wood by the roadside, and, being informed that it was inhabited by the Moravians, he alighted from his carriage, entered the humble abode, greeted the refugees in the most cordial manner, and, before leaving them, kneeled down, and prayed for the blessing of God upon them.

The hand of industry, and the smiles of providence, caused Herrnhut to grow rapidly into a flourishing and beautiful village. As opportunity served, other Brethren from Moravia and Bohemia, escaped from their cruel house of bondage, and, leaving all behind them for Christ's sake, they fled to Herrnhut. Godly people of other persuasions, also, sought and found an asylum in this retreat.

Some of these were Lutherans, others Reformed, and others still Mennonites. Though differing in regard to some things, they were all perfectly united in Christ, and generally agreed in regard to those things which are essential in both faith and practice. Zinzendorf's interest in the Brethren, and his affection for them, increased continually, until at length his heart was fully won, and he became heartily and permanently identified with them in the renewed church.

It became necessary, as we may well suppose, for the people who had settled at Herrnhut, to organize themselves into a society for the enforcement and preservation of sound faith and Gospel discipline. This was effected in 1727, two hundred and seventy years after the original United Brethren church had been organized on the confines of Moravia and Silesia.

The first three rules or resolutions, adopted without a dissenting voice at Herrnhut, in the re-organization of the Brethren church, contain the "fundamental principles" of the society:

I. "It shall never be forgotten *in Herrnhut*, that it is built on the living God, and is a work of his Almighty hand. It is not

so much a *new* settlement as an institution formed for the *Brethren*, and on their account.

II. "Herrnhut, with those properly intended to be its inhabitants, (i. e. Moravian exiles) shall constantly maintain love with all God's children in every Christian denomination, shall judge none, and abstain from all contentious and unseemly behavior towards those with whom they may differ in opinion; and endeavor to preserve, among its own members, the purity, simplicity, and grace of evangelical truth.

III. "In Herrnhut, the Holy Scriptures shall be the only standard of faith and practice, by which our whole conduct ought to be regulated. Agreeably to the word of God, we can acknowledge such only for genuine members of the body of Christ, in whom the following marks of true faith are discernible:

"Whoever does not confess that he hath been apprehended solely by the grace of God in Christ, and that he needs this grace every moment of his life;—that the most perfect rectitude of conduct, (if it even were attainable) can be of no avail in the sight of God without the intercession of Jesus,



pleading the merit of his blood, and can be rendered acceptable only through Christ; whoever does not make it clearly manifest that he is really in earnest to be delivered from sin, (for which Christ has suffered) to become, daily, more holy and more like the image of God, in which man was created, to be more and more purified from the remains of natural corruption, vanity, and self-will, to walk even as Jesus walked, and willing to bear his reproach—such a one is not a genuine brother. But whoever holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, though some of his opinions may be sectarian, fanatical, or otherwise erroneous, shall not, on that account, be despised by us, or, if he separate himself from us, be forsaken, or treated as an enemy; but we will bear and forbear with him in love, patience, and meekness. Such persons, though they do not dissent from the fundamentals of faith, yet do not steadfastly continue in them, shall be considered as weak and halting Brethren, and be restored in the spirit of meekness.”

Prudential measures, in conformity to the spirit of these resolutions, were, from time to time, adopted. The year which marked

the renewal of the United Brethren was also remarkable for the great revival with which Herrnhut was visited. Brotherly love was greatly increased; and preaching by the regular pastor, Rev. Mr. Rothe, and other ministers who visited the place, was attended with astonishing power and unction. Thousands flocked to the place of public worship from far and near, and the meetings were sometimes continued, without intermission, from six o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon.

The 13th of August, 1727, was a day which should never be forgotten. On the 10th, the Brethren "continued together in prayer, singing hymns and spiritual discourse until late at night." Each one endeavored to "dedicate himself with full purpose of heart to the Lord," and "more than an earthly influence animated the whole assembly." On the 12th, Count Zinzendorf, who had not yet assumed the clerical office, and was still a high officer of state, paid a visit to each family in Herrnhut, and conversed with them in relation to the communion which was to be celebrated the next day. In the evening, every member of the congregation signed the stat-

utes. The next day, while on the way to church, which was about one mile from the village, "those who had taken offense at each other mutually confessed their faults, became reconciled, and were united in love." That day, in God's house, every heart was full, and the singing was almost drowned by loud weeping, and other expressions of overpowering emotion. It is a remarkable fact, that two of the elders who were far distant in Moravia, felt, during the hours of this remarkable meeting, a strong impulse moving them to pray, and, retiring into a garret of the house, "they poured out their souls to God with an unusual degree of emotion."\*

The revival manifested itself with great power among the children and youth; and many of tender age were made savingly acquainted with Christ, who, in after years, with a disinterestedness and devotion which has never been surpassed, carried the glad tidings of salvation into heathen lands. The earliest of these youthful converts was a little girl of about eleven years, who, when the light broke in upon her sorrowing heart, exclaimed, "Now I am a child

\* See a full account of this revival in Holmes, Vol. 1.



of God!" The interest became so absorbing that, on the evening of the 29th of August, two meetings were commenced in the open air, and continued until the break of day.

In this way was the church of the United Brethren rescued from bondage, [when their enemies regarded them as dead] re-organized, baptized, and prepared to enter upon the great missionary work, among the dead and dying churches of the reformation, and among the heathen, which has rendered their name precious to every friend of evangelical religion.

The renewed United Brethren had no ecclesiastical connection with the original United Brethren, as the original United Brethren had none with the Waldenses; but they had what was far more important, a life connection with them through Jesus Christ, and, therefore, in the highest sense in which the term can be used, they were one and the same church. In some prudential measures they differed from the first Brethren, as the Brethren differed from the Waldenses; but in all things essential to the being and prosperity of a true Christian church they agreed perfectly.

It was an outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples at Jerusalem, which quickened them into a living church, and sent them forth to preach. Similar outpourings of the same Spirit, in fulfillment of the same promise of the Father, kept alive the flame of evangelical fire among the Waldenses, through all the long night of the Middle Ages, inasmuch that no earthly or satanic power could quench it. And, owing to an effusion of the same ever-blessed Spirit, the people of God, of various persuasions, were united into one body, as United Brethren, and prepared to accomplish the work assigned them in Moravia, in 1457, and after 270 years at Herrnhut; and, presently, our attention will be invited to a revival among the German people in the United States, similar to that experienced at Herrnhut, which, under the supervision of divine providence, resulted in the spread of evangelical religion in this country, through the agency of the United Brethren in Christ.

## CHAPTER V.

## UNITED BRETHREN IN ENGLAND.

SHORTLY after the Spirit had been poured out upon the United Brethren at Herrnhut, divine providence opened the way for the employment of that unquenchable missionary zeal which is an invariable accompaniment of every genuine revival, and missionaries were sent out into various countries of Europe; and, after a few years, into heathen lands also. In 1728, the year following the memorable meetings at Herrnhut, United Brethren missionaries visited England, where they were instrumental in commencing the most remarkable revival of religion among the English people, on record.

The state of religion in England, and, in fact, throughout Europe, as before stated, was deplorable indeed. Very few, even of the ministers of religion, had any practical acquaintance with Christ. Ten years later, and subsequent to John Wesley's conversion,



he wrote to Zinzendorf that he knew of "ten truly enlightened ministers in England;" in addition to whom he adds, "I have found one Anabaptist, and one, if not two, teachers among the Presbyterians, who, I hope, love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and teach the way of God in truth." How poorly prepared was such a blinded ministry, to withstand the influence of that bold, subtle, and widespread infidelity, which, at that period, was poisoning the literature, and corrupting the morals, of all classes of society.

One year after the United Brethren had visited England, a society, consisting of a few young men, among whom was John Wesley, was organized at Oxford. Sometime after, George Whitfield was enrolled among its members. The object of this society, or club, was the promotion of practical religion; but it does not appear that any one of its members had ever experienced a change of heart, or knew, experimentally, the way of life. They were, however, honest and earnest inquirers.

After completing his studies, Mr. Wesley was ordained a minister, and sent to America, as a missionary. Happily, on the vessel which brought him to the New World, there

were twenty-six United Brethren, with whom he soon formed a very agreeable acquaintance. The safety of the vessel upon which they sailed, was greatly endangered by violent storms. But this was the means of bringing before Mr. Wesley's mind the very important truth, that perfect love casteth out fear. He had already been struck with the humility and excellent temper of the Brethren; but, when the sea broke over the vessel, poured in between the decks, and split the mainsail in pieces, they exhibited a happy composure of mind, which he was unable to understand; for, while the English passengers screamed in terror, and Mr. Wesley himself was in distressing fear of death, the Brethren, with entire presence of mind, continued to sing a psalm which had been commenced. After the storm had abated, Mr. Wesley said to one of the Brethren,—“Was you not afraid? He answered, I thank God, no! But, were not your women and children afraid? He replied, mildly, No, our women and children are not afraid to die.”

Arriving at Savannah, Mr. Wesley soon had an interview with Spangenberg, a United Brethren bishop, of sound learning and deep piety, of whom he asked advice in respect

to the missionary labors which he expected to undertake. The bishop replied, "My brother, I must first ask you two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God?" Mr. Wesley knew not what to answer, for he was, as yet, in his sins; but the simple piety and excellent manners of the Brethren, impressed him very favorably. He wrote:—"They were always employed, always cheerful themselves, and in good humor with one another." Of one of their ecclesiastical meetings, which he attended, he says:—"After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The simplicity, as well as solemnity, of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not; but *Paul*, the tent-maker, or *Peter*, the fisherman, presided; yet with the demonstration of the Spirit, and power."

Closing his labors in Georgia, Mr. Wesley returned to England, ignorant still of the way of salvation. On the voyage he became fully convinced that he was not a true Christian; and, when nearing the coasts of his native



land, he wrote, in the bitterness of his spirit:—"I went to America to convert the Indians; but Oh! who shall convert me? Oh! who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it? What must I do to be saved?" Shortly after his return, he had an interview with Peter Bohler, and other United Brethren, who were then laboring with much success in England. He was amazed when they unfolded to him the way of life, through faith. This interview was followed by many others, which eventuated in the removal of the last doubt from his mind. At a Brethren meeting in 1739, the way of salvation by faith, became so plain to his mind, that he could only cry out,—“Lord, help thou my unbelief.”

He now united with a United Brethren society in Fetter Lane, London,—a society which, to use the language of its constitution, “was organized, in obedience to the command of God, by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Bohler.” Now his sense of sin, and need of a Savior, pressed still more heavily upon him, so that he wrote: “I feel that I am sold under sin. I know, too, that I deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations. \* \* \*

So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire; I am a sinner, altogether meet to be consumed." Not long after these agonizing words were penned, he was enabled to trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given him that his sins were taken away, and that he was saved from the law of sin and death.

Charles Wesley was converted about three days before his brother John. He had visited one of the small Moravian assemblies, and says: "I thought myself in a choir of angels." Soon after, while suffering from a fit of sickness, he was entertained at the house of a poor, pious member of the Brethren society, named Bray. This mechanic read and expounded the Scriptures to his gifted and learned guest, and directed his troubled mind into the way of life. Mr. C. Wesley says:—"God sent Mr. Bray, a poor, ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; yet, by knowing him, knows and discerns all things." While at this man's house he was enabled to trust in Christ.

Soon after his happy conversion had occurred, Mr. John Wesley visited the Brethren at Herrnhut, and at Marienborn, where they

had also planted a church. At Marienborn he met Count Zinzendorf. From this place he wrote: "God has given me, at length, the desire of my heart. I am with a church whose conversation is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who so walk as he walked. \* \* \* O, how high and holy a thing Christianity is! And how widely different from that—I know not what—which is so called, though it neither purifies the heart, nor renews the life, after the image of our blessed Redeemer." From Herrnhut he wrote: "I would gladly have spent my life here. O, when shall THIS Christianity cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea!" He returned to England, greatly strengthened in the Lord.

About this time Mr. Whitfield returned from America, and we find both these great evangelists at a United Brethren love-feast meeting, at Fetter Lane, lighting their torches, to use a figure, at the United Brethren altar. Of this memorable meeting, Mr. Wesley wrote, in his journal: "About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground.



As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord." This meeting occurred in 1739.

Mr. Wesley's connection with the United Brethren was suddenly broken off, in 1740, owing to some slight difference of opinion, which arose between him and Philip Henry Malthers, who was pastor of the church at Fetter Lane, in regard to doctrine; and also because he disapproved of some of the rules of discipline, "which the Brethren deemed essential to the spiritual welfare of the Society." When he had made up his mind to withdraw from the Society, he read a paper to the congregation, at a public meeting, in which his reasons for withdrawal were stated. When the reading was finished, he said: "You who are of the same judgment, follow me." "I, then," he adds, "without saying any thing more, withdrew, as did eighteen members of the Society." Those who withdrew, met at the Foundry, where they organized the first Methodist society in the world.\*

\* For further information on this subject the reader is referred to Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, Vol. II., p. 82. Also to Holmes' *His-*

Although Mr. Wesley withdrew from the Brethren, under a misapprehension, probably, of some of their views, yet he retained, himself, and carried into the Methodist societies which he formed, a large share of the United Brethren spirit; and he always regarded the Brethren with feelings of peculiar affection. "I marvel," said he, at one time, "that I refrain from joining these men; I scarce ever see any of them, but my heart burns within me; I long to be with them, and yet I am kept from them."

The labors of the Brethren, in England, were not confined to London. During 1738, the year of the conversion of the Wesleys, an extensive revival was in progress, under their labors, in Yorkshire, and many societies were organized there by John Toeltschig, a Moravian exile, in conjunction with Messrs. Ingham and Delamotte. Shut out of the churches, and bitterly persecuted, they resorted to the fields and barns, where they gathered vast congregations; "and such was the eagerness of the people to hear, and such the

tory of the United Brethren, Vol. I., pp. 311, 312, 313. Holmes vindicates Malthus, and the church at Fetter Lane, from the errors which have been attributed to them, and which are reiterated in Steven's History of Methodism.

impression made on their minds by the doctrine of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus, that they listened with silent and fixed attention to the discourses of Toeltschig, and other Germans, whose imperfect knowledge of the English language made them, indeed, speak with "stammering tongues." But the defects of the speakers were lost in the power which accompanied their testimony.\* In 1740, Mr. Ingham, in his report, said: "There are now upwards of fifty societies, where the people meet for edification." At a public meeting held in 1742, a thousand members of the Brethren societies were convened. In 1741 a society, called "*The Brethren's Society for the furtherance of the Gospel among the heathen*," was organized in London. "The members met once a month, for consultation, receiving missionary intelligence, and for prayer." Crantz, in his history of the Brethren, observes that "the very sight of these truly apostolic men, and their zeal for the conversion of the heathen, influenced neither by pride and vainglory, nor affected pharisaical piety, but accompanied by a humane, cheerful, and humble deportment, was

\* Holmes, p. 316.



most edifying to us, and awakened an ardent desire in us to do our part in furtherance of this noble design."

We can not enter at length into the history of the United Brethren in England; but, from what we have stated, it is evident, we think, that the great religious movement, in England, at the beginning of which the Wesleys were converted, had its origin, under God, in the United Brethren who went out from Herrnhut, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, and intent on the conversion of the world to Christ. We have seen how these German Brethren, understanding the English language but imperfectly, opened the Scriptures to learned ministers, who had been educated at Oxford, prayed for them when they became penitent, and rejoiced with them when they found the pearl of great price.

Lighting their torches at the altars on which the evangelical fire had been kept burning brightly among the United Brethren, Menonites, and Waldenses, through long, long ages of darkness and persecution, the Wesleys, and their coadjutors, went forth with apostolic faith and zeal, disseminating the light of salvation wherever the English language was spoken.

As we pursue our subject, we shall see how that, from the same sacred altar, the light of reformation burst forth as the morning, among the Germans in America. This will introduce us to another branch of United Brethren history.

## CHAPTER VI.

## UNITED BRETHREN IN AMERICA.

THE quenchless zeal for the salvation of men, kindled by the Holy Spirit at Herrnhut, moved the United Brethren to undertake the conversion of the American Indians, who, at that period, were the principal owners and inhabitants of this vast country. Accordingly, the first company of missionaries reached America in 1735; and, about the year 1736, bishop SPANGENBERG, a devoted evangelist and servant of God, spent some time in Pennsylvania, where he was the means of confirming and comforting some in the faith, and of leading others into the way of life.

Although there were, at that period, ministers and churches, and not a little denominational zeal, in this country, yet it is generally admitted that the life and power of godliness were almost unknown, both in the ministry and laity. Any one who professed a change of heart, and claimed "the witness



of the Spirit," was the object of ridicule, if not of persecution; but any minister or member might frequent the tavern, visit the races, or participate in the promiscuous dance, without exciting remark, or subjecting himself to reproof.

However, between 1738 and 1770, multitudes of the English-speaking people, in the older localities, between Georgia and Massachusetts, were favored with frequent visits from that flaming evangelist, George Whitfield, and through his influence great numbers, both of ministers and laymen, were aroused from the sleep of sin, and, through faith in Jesus, were introduced into a new spiritual life.

The people speaking the German language were, if possible, in a worse condition than the English. They were, with few exceptions, members of the Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite, and Tunker churches; and, although ardently attached to the churches in which they had been trained, and even obstinately religious, in their way, yet very few of them had any clearer idea of the new birth than the Jewish ruler, who came to Jesus by night.

The Lutheran population numbered, in

1748, not less than 60,000 souls. Of them, Dr. Muhlenberg, who devoted his valuable life to their improvement, in a letter to Halle, said: "The spiritual state of our people is so wretched as to cause us to shed tears in abundance. The young people have grown up without any knowledge of religion, and are fast running into heathenism."\* The population adhering to the Reformed faith, about the middle of the century, 1750, numbered between 30,000 and 60,000 souls,† and, as a body, were much like the Lutherans. The Mennonites, who also constituted a numerous and influential portion of the population of Pennsylvania, had lost the spirit of the noble confessors and martyrs who honor their earlier history; and the power of religion had declined among them to such a lamentable extent, that a truly converted person could with difficulty be found in many of their churches. They were, however, scrupulously honest and upright in their behavior, and adhered, with more than pharisaical exactitude, to certain forms of religion. The same may be said of the Tunkers and Amish.

\* Life and Times of Muhlenberg, p. 68. † Schlatter's Life and Journal, p. 201.

But it must not be inferred from the foregoing facts, that all had departed from God, and were walking in the blindness of their own minds. Within the bosom of all the churches named, persons might have been found, widely scattered, it is true, who had experienced a change of heart, and were walking humbly with God. Some of these were fruits of the revival promoted by Spener; others had been brought to the knowledge of the truth, while in Germany, by the Brethren; others were a remnant, still surviving the general declension, of the once spiritual Mennonite societies; and, in 1734, a colony of Saltzbergers,—one of the remnants of the long-suffering Waldenses of Piedmont, driven from their homes by that papal power which in vain had sought their extirpation for a thousand years, settled in Georgia, under the patronage of General Oglethorpe. These last mentioned were a remarkably spiritual people, and their earliest pastors, BOLZIUS and GRONAU, were among the first candlesticks in the Lord's hand in this country. Ebenezer,—“Rock of Help,”—built by the Saltzbergers, in the wilderness, shed an humble light upon the surrounding darkness.



ISRAEL CHRISTIAN GRONAU, one of the pastors of these pious people, died in 1745. During his last sickness, "his heart continually enjoyed communion with his Redeemer." "Nothing," said his fellow-laborer, "troubled him, for he tasted the reconciliation with God, and the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost. \* \* \* When one of his brethren took hold of his hand, which he had lifted up in praise to God, to cover it with the bed-clothes, he desired that the friend might support his arm in the uplifted position. This being done, he exclaimed, 'Come, Lord Jesus! Amen, amen!' With these words he closed his eyes and lips, and entered into the joy of the Lord, full of peace." In 1765, Bolzius also died. A little while before his death, he was visited in his solitary home by a Christian friend, to whom he said: "I can not describe how happy I am in my solitude, whilst I enjoy the presence and communion of my Savior! Happy! oh, indescribably happy!" His friend then recited to him the Lord's words,—"Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may see my glory, which thou hast given me." The dying witness for Jesus

repeated the words, "*that they may see my glory,*" and added,—“Ah! how delightful it is in yonder heaven! how delightful to be with Christ! These men possessed true religion—the religion which sustained their brethren during the dark centuries, when they were hunted down like wild beasts for Christ's sake.

As early as 1726, JOHN BACHTEL, a truly converted man, and afterward minister of Jesus Christ, emigrated from Germany, and settled at Germantown, Pa., where he resided until 1746. He experienced a change of heart in Germany, in his youth; but afterward, while a traveling journeyman, he fell from grace. Through the mercy of God, however, he was re-awakened, and, with many tears, he sought and found forgiveness. Ever afterward he was an unswerving witness for Jesus.

HENRY ANTES was another clear light in that dark period. It is not known when he settled in America, when he was converted, nor when he commenced to preach; but he was, evidently, one of the most active and spiritual Christians of his day.

When bishop Spangenberg came into Pennsylvania, he soon formed an acquaintance

with Bachtel, Antes, Stiefel, Gruber, and others of like precious faith, whom he confirmed and strengthened in the Lord. In an account of his life and experience, Mr. Bachtel relates that, in 1738, he became acquainted with Spangenberg when he resided at Schippach, Pa., to which place he, with others, were in the habit of going once a month. He says: "The sainted Brothers Antes, Stiefel, J. Adam Gruber, myself, and others from Germantown, enjoyed many blessed hours together" in association and worship with Spangenberg. These awakened and enlightened Christians very much desired to form a closer union with each other, that they might edify one another in love, and unite their labors to advance the cause of Christ; and at the meetings at Schippach, and at other times and places, the subject was discussed.

At length, in 1741, they issued a circular inviting all true Christians, of every name, to meet in a convention, in order to consider, in a fraternal spirit, what might be done. This circular read as follows:

"In the name of Jesus! Amen!

"My dear friend and brother:

"Since a fearful injury is done in the



church of Christ among those souls who are called to the Lamb, and this mostly through the mistrust and suspicion, and that often without foundation, which we entertain toward one another, by which every attempt to do good is frustrated,—and since, contrary to this, we are commanded to love one another,—the question has been discussed in the minds of some persons for two or more years, whether it would not be possible to bring about a general assembly, not for the purpose of disputing with one another, but to confer, in love, on the important articles of faith, in order to see how near all could come together in fundamental points, and in other matters that do not overthrow the ground of salvation, to bear with one another in charity, that thus all judging and condemning among the above-mentioned souls might be abated and prevented: since by such uncharitableness we expose ourselves before the world, and give it occasion to say: *Those who preach peace and conversion themselves stand against each other.* These facts have induced many brethren and God-fearing souls to take this important matter into earnest consideration, and to view it in the presence of the Lord; and they have

concluded to assemble on the coming New Year's day in Germantown. Accordingly, you also are heartily entreated, with several others of your brethren who rest on good ground, and can give a reason for their faith, to assemble with us, if the Lord permit you so to do. Nearly all others have been informed of this by the same kind of letter as is here sent to you. It is believed that it will be a large assembly; but let not this keep you back; every thing will be done without much rumor. The Lord Jesus grant his blessing to it.

"From your poor and humble, but sincere friend and brother.

"HENRY ANTES.

"Frederick Tp., Phila. Co., Dec. 15, 1741."\*

Shortly after this call was issued, Count Zinzendorf reached Philadelphia, animated with the blessed spirit which reigned at Herrnhut. He soon became the leader of those who had a knowledge of the Savior, in the forgiveness of sins. Mr. Bachtel, in speaking of this visit, says:

"In 1742, when the dear, departed dis-

\* I am indebted to the "Fathers of the German Reformed Church" for this circular, and for many of the facts in relation to this movement.

ciple, Count Zinzendorf, came to Pennsylvania, I became acquainted with him and other Brethren. My heart, at once, felt a tender inclination towards them, and I loved them sincerely. When I, for the first time, heard the Count preach, in the church at Germantown, I said in my heart: Yes, this is truly the only and true ground of salvation—Jesus Christ and his merits and sufferings. Other foundation can no man lay; through his death alone has life been secured to us. From this time on the Brethren (Moravian) were the pleasantest society at my house; and when hatred and bitterness in the country against them began, I also received my honest share."

The contemplated union convention met at Germantown, January 1st, 1742, ten years previous to Mr. Otterbein's arrival in this country, and a little more than twenty years previous to the inauguration of a movement, exactly similar in spirit, under his labors, in Lancaster county, Pa. There were present at the convention Christian brethren who stood in the Lutheran, German Reformed, Mennonite, Brethren, and Tunker churches. Some other bodies were also represented.



Zinzendorf entered heartily into the spirit of the convention, for it was essentially Christian, and truly United Brethren. It was the spirit which had animated the general conference of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; controlled the Waldenses and Albigenses in the most trying periods of religious history; ruled in the councils of the Bohemian Brethren; drawn together, into a well-organized body, the *Unitas Fratrum* at Fulneck, and long years after the fugitives who built Herrnhut. As was to have been expected, the Count soon became the leader of the movement. The first convention was dissolved in peace and brotherly love; and, during the winter and spring of the same year, six other conventions of a similar character were held. At the third, an organization, denominated, "THE CONGREGATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT," was consummated.

In doctrine, those who entered this union were distinctively Arminian. They were particular in insisting upon the universality of the atonement; and, hence, they soon came into conflict with those ministers of the Reformed church who were Calvinistic in faith. With respect to Christian experience, they

occupied the high Scriptural ground, that no one can be a true Christian without a change of heart; and holiness of heart was deemed an essential qualification for membership in the household of faith. In practical life, they cultivated the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, meekness, and temperance. And they were not only interested in religion for themselves, but they longed for the salvation of a lost world. It was pre-eminently a missionary body. Zinzendorf, Bachtel, Antes, Spangenberg, and others, went out in the fraternal spirit of this union, and proclaimed, to all within their reach, a free, present, and full salvation to all who would repent of their sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. A bright day seemed about to dawn upon the unhappy German people of America. The wilderness and the solitary places were about to be made glad, and the desert to blossom as the rose.

Alas! these hopes were destined to early disappointment. As soon as the movement became formidable, the old high-church spirit arose up against it, and overthrew it.

Who would have thought it possible, and yet it was true, the church at Germantown,

for whom the pious John Bachtel had labored sixteen years, cast him out of her communion. This was accomplished, after much trouble, in 1744.

And, unfortunately for this union movement, during the very year of its inauguration, Dr. Muhlenberg arrived in America. He was a good man; but, from his decided Lutheran stand-point, strongly opposed to the organization of a church to be composed only of true Christians. Being a man of talent, industry, zeal, and devotion to the cause, he succeeded in drawing away from the congregation many of the Lutherans who had been attracted toward it, and of closing up the way of the evangelists, who labored in the union, to Lutheran communities. We would not judge Dr. Muhlenberg harshly, but it does not appear that he possessed the spirit of Spener, or he could not have come into conflict with Zinzendorf. And it is a sad fact that, although he was a devoted Christian, and did a great deal of good, yet no revival of religion ever, so far as we can learn, occurred under his labors.\*

\* In the Memoir of his Life and Times, we have many notices of his labors similar to the following: "In the month of November, I



But the most determined opposition to this movement came from Michael Schlatter, of the German Reformed church. He was, evidently, a less spiritual man than Muhlenberg. Rev. John Philip Boehm, a prominent Reformed minister of long standing in America, had been a bitter opponent of the union from its inception, and, at an early period, published a treatise against it. It does not appear that he had ever experienced a change of heart, or that he insisted upon the necessity of such change as a condition of church membership. Immediately on the arrival of Mr. Schlatter, he accepted of Mr. Boehm as his counsellor, and at once set himself violently against the union. He was especially bitter

confirmed and admitted to the Lord's Supper, the young people whom I had instructed. There were twenty-six in number, chiefly adults, one of whom was a married man. They had committed to memory the questions on the plan of salvation with considerable accuracy. I earnestly labored to impress them with the proper import of what they had learned; and, without ceasing, admonished them to frequent prayer and the practice of what they had heard. \* \* The greater part also assured me, in personal conversations I had with them, that they have frequently been upon their knees in private, at home, and that they have experienced in their hearts the influences of the Spirit of God through the Word." Had Muhlenberg taught these people that they must not only go on their knees frequently at home, but experience a change of heart before they could be received into the church, how different would have been the history of the Lutheran church in America.

against the "crafty Herrnhuters," as he denominated the United Brethren. By his indefatigable labors he succeeded in closing up the way of access to the perishing German Reformed communities. Some good Reformed ministers went to the United Brethren; others confessed that they had erred in entering into the union, and withdrew from it; while a few, almost disheartened, determined still to wait for the redemption of Israel. Mr. Schlatter traveled a great number of miles, and baptized and confirmed very many people, but it does not appear, from any information we can gather of his life and labors, that he was ever converted himself, or that he was the means of the conversion of a single soul in America. He was frequently involved in difficulties with his own brethren, and, at length, turned his attention almost wholly to secular affairs. Around his death-bed no light appears to have shone.

A few years sufficed to narrow down the "Congregation of God in the Spirit" mainly to the limits of the United Brethren. But it was not, as we shall presently see, a failure. Indeed, it seems to have been a seed cast into the earth, which, after a few

years, sprang up with vigorous growth. And in this case, as in many others, the wrath of man was made to praise God; for the unrelenting and most powerful enemy of the revival movement, into which Zinzendorf, Antes, and many others, had thrown their hearts, was the agent in bringing to this country a young man of piety and learning, who, in connection with others, inaugurated a movement similar in spirit to that which had been defeated, but far more powerful and successful, and which was carried forward, under his wise supervision, for nearly half a century. The commencement and progress of this movement will be the subject of the following pages.



**PART SECOND.**

PLATE SECOND.

## CHAPTER 1.

### PHILIP WILLIAM OTTERBEIN.

IF the reader will turn to a map of Germany, he will find toward its western side, bordering on Rhenish Prussia, the little Duchy of Nassau. It has an area of 1,751 square miles, and a population, mostly Protestant, of 430,000. Frankfort-on-the-Main touches it on the south-east, and Wisbaden is its capital and chief city. On the narrow neck of mountainous country which runs up between Westphalia and Hesse Cassel, not far from the Westerwald, is situated the little town of DILLENBERG. It contains two thousand five hundred inhabitants, and has a college, a hospital, an orphan asylum, and a ruined castle—a gray relic of the feudal age. In this village PHILIP WILLIAM OTTERBEIN was born, on the 4th day of June, A. D. 1726.

His parents were members of the Reformed church. His father, "the reverend and



very learned John Daniel Otterbein," was for a while rector of a Latin school in Herborn, and afterward an affectionate and faithful pastor of congregations in Fronhausen and Wissenbach. He died in 1742. His mother, Wilhelmina Henrietta, was a woman of very superior understanding and piety. He had three brothers and one sister. The brothers all obtained a thorough classical and theological education, and devoted themselves to the sacred office. Gottlieb, the eldest of the brothers, appears to have been a truly enlightened and deeply pious man; and after William had entered fully into the liberty of the children of God, and upon the work of reformation in America, he received from him warm-hearted sympathy and valuable counsel.

The charge of "Pietism" has been laid at the door of the Otterbein family; and the facts that have come down to us favor the supposition that it was one of the few precious German families in which the influence of the revival of the preceding century, promoted by Spener and others, was still cherished.\*

\* Gottlieb Otterbein was the author of a work on experimental and practical Christianity, which was much prized by the pious.

It is but just to attribute no small share of the purity, strength, and beauty of Mr. Otterbein's character, as well as his remarkable success in the ministry, to the benign influences of the Christian home in which he was trained up. That he might be thoroughly furnished for every good work, his parents spared neither pains nor expense in his education; and, after he had completed the usual classical and theological studies required of candidates for the ministry, (which included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Philosophy, and Divinity\*) to the entire satisfaction of his seniors, he was solemnly consecrated to the sacred office. His ordination occurred in 1749, at Herborn,† on the Dille, a few days after he had reached his twenty-fourth year.

With a deep sense of the responsibilities of the ministerial office, Mr. Otterbein entered the pulpit of the Reformed church in his native town; and it was soon perceived that no ordinary measure of grace had been committed unto him. His sermons were remarkable for their plainness, spirit, and evangel-

\* Spayth, p. 18.

† Herborn is the seat of a celebrated Calvinistic Seminary founded in 1584.

ical power; and they occasioned both censure and applause. His more pious friends, while in heart approving of both the matter and the manner of his discourses, advised him, nevertheless, to moderate his zeal, and to use greater caution in reproof, in order that he might avoid the displeasure of those in authority, some of whom had felt themselves too sharply reproved for their sins, by the young preacher.\* But it was not in Otterbein's nature to swerve one hair's breadth from what he believed to be the line of duty; and the clamor raised against him only added point to his reproofs, force to his arguments, and fervor to his exhortations. He was not, at this period, in possession of the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace, but he was pressing toward it; and it is evident that he was not only dissatisfied with, but grieved and alarmed at, the low state of religion in the Reformed church.

Unfortunately for Germany, the reformation left the church and state in close and unholy alliance,—an alliance which has always been disgraceful to religion; and it is a humiliating, yet undisputed fact, that both

\* Spayth, p. 19.



have warred, but too successfully, against that civil and religious freedom with which the Creator has endowed every human being. At the beck of the church clergy, the magistrate has ever been ready to intimidate, restrict, arrest, and imprison God's true ministers; and the clergy, in return for such services, and for their fat livings, have, in almost all cases, taken sides with power and wrong, against the people and the right; thus misrepresenting and dishonoring the religion of the Bible.

And, in this case, although Mr. O. was a man of blameless life, and preached nothing contrary to the word of God, the "authorities were privately solicited to arrest his preaching, for a season," at least.\* When his mother was informed of this fact, she said to him, "Ah, William, I expected this, and give you joy. This place is too narrow for you, my son; they will not receive you here; you will find your work elsewhere."

His mother believed that he was peculiarly fitted for the missionary work, and that God would open his way into some wide field of usefulness; but when and

\* Spayth, p. 20.

where, she knew not. She was prepared, however, to make any sacrifice which might be demanded. Her solicitude was not that her son should secure a lucrative professorship, for which he was eminently fitted, or a rich and honorable living in the church, to which he might have aspired, but that he might, in the best possible manner, glorify God in the salvation of men. Noble Christian mother!

At the period under consideration, the Lutheran and German Reformed churches in America were almost entirely dependent upon the churches of the Fatherland for a supply of preachers; but, for a long time, no efficient measures were adopted to send out missionaries into the then wilderness land. The missionary spirit, if it existed at all, was at an exceedingly low ebb everywhere in the world outside of the United Brethren societies. Letters, however, were constantly returning to the parent country, from the more enlightened and pious in this, describing the sad destitution of the people, great numbers of whom were as sheep without a shepherd, begging the churches to send them pastors and teachers, and the means, in part, of supporting

them. One of those affecting appeals, received by Mr. Gottlieb Otterbein, was the immediate means of turning William's attention to the New World as the probable theater of his missionary labors.

Toward the close of the year 1751, Rev. Michael Schlatter, who had spent five years in America, as an exploring missionary, under the direction of the synods of North and South Holland, and who had made himself extensively acquainted with the wants of the German churches in this country, especially in Pennsylvania, returned to Germany, and went to the Palatinate for the purpose of procuring six young ministers for the American field.\*

The way being so soon and so unexpectedly opened, Mr. Otterbein did not hesitate to respond to Mr. Schlatter's call, and, being accepted, he began immediately to make preparations to enter upon the work.

Dr. Schramm, superintendent of the Reformed church in Nassau, gave him the following letter of salutation:

LECTORIS SALUTEM!

Reverendus et doctissimus vir juvenis,  
Philippus Guilhelmus Otterbeinius, gente

\* Schlatter's Life and Journal.



Nassauius, domo Dillenburgensis, S. Ministerii Candidatus, classis tertiæ hujus pædagogii præceptor, manuum impositione assistentibus Cl. Arnoldo, professore atque primario cœtus Herbornensis pastore, et admodum reverendo Klingelhœfero ejusdem ecclesiæ secundo, ut vicariam in cœtu Ockersdorpiano præstaret opem 13 Junii, 1749, ordinationis a me impetravit axioma. Quod his ad ejus requisitionem testor, et dilecto meo quondam Auditori in peregrinas abiturienti oras, fausta quævis prosperumque iter ex animo precor, constantis mei adversus eum adfectus monumentum.

(Signans) JOH. HENRICUS SCHRAMMIUS,

Theologia Doctor et Ecclesiarum Nassaicarum Superintendens  
Herbornæ, III Calendas Martias, 1752.\*

TRANSLATION.

THE READER, GREETING:—

The reverend and very learned young man, Philip William Otterbein, from Dillenburg, in Nassau, a candidate of the holy ministry, and a teacher of the third class in this seminary, received by me, assisted by Cl. Arnold, Professor and First

\* The original copy of this letter was handed to Rev. John Hildt, by Mr. Otterbein, near the close of his life, and, by Mr. Hildt, placed in the Telescope office. We are indebted to Rev. J. Degmeier for the accompanying translation.

Pastor of the congregation at Herborn, and by the very Rev. Klingelhöfer, Second Pastor of the same church, on the 13th of June, 1749,—ordination by laying on of hands,—with the view of exercising his ministerial functions as vicar of the congregation at Ockersdorf. This I certify at his request, and recommend to all whom the present letter may interest, my much-esteemed former hearer, who is now about to emigrate to a foreign country, wish him a prosperous voyage, and subscribe this letter as a testimonial of my never-failing affection towards him.



JOHN HENRY SCHRAMM,

Doctor of Theology, and Supt. of the Church of Nassau.

Dated at Herborn, Feb. 28, 1752.

Steam navigation had not, at that period, rendered a trip across the ocean, as now, a mere pleasure excursion. Months were frequently consumed on the voyage, and owing to civil wars and other causes, the communication between the two countries was frequently interrupted for long periods. When the time, therefore, for the departure of her beloved William arrived, Mrs. Otterbein felt that the sacrifice was greater

than she could bear. Ten years before, her husband had been called home; and, in all probability, the contemplated separation from her son in this life would be—as, indeed, it proved to be—final. As the appointed hour drew near she retired to her closet, and there poured out her maternal heart in prayer for grace to make the sacrifice, and for a blessing upon her son; and then, calmly trusting in God, she returned; and, taking him by the hand, and pressing that hand to her lips, she said: “Go, my son! The Lord bless thee, and with much grace direct thy steps. On earth I may not see thy face again; but go.”\* “With what strange and beautiful courage and grace can a mother’s love bind its sacrifice upon the altar.”†

Early in the spring of 1752, the six young men whom Mr. Schlatter had been commissioned, by the reverend synods of Holland, to employ, presented themselves at the Hague, for examination. Five of them were from Nassau, the other from Berg. Their names were Otterbein, Stoy, Waldschmid, Frankenfeld, Wissler, and Ru-

\* H. G. Spayth’s *His. U. B. in Christ*. † *Fathers of the German Reformed Church*.



bel. The synods required that the candidates for the American mission should be "orthodox, pious, learned, of an humble disposition, diligent, sound in body, and eagerly desirous after, not earthly, but heavenly treasure, and especially the salvation of immortal souls;" and that persons of this description should be "examined thoroughly, by the deputies of the synods, as to their knowledge of theology, and of the Greek and Hebrew languages; and, being found qualified, they were to be furnished with

"1. An outfit from Germany or Switzerland to Pennsylvania, as it regards the person, books, and other necessities.

"2. Besides perquisites, (*sic dicta jura stolae*) a yearly salary of fifty Belgic florins."

After a particular examination before the deputies, the candidates were all accepted and consecrated; and, in March, 1752, they sailed from the Hague. In the evening of July 27th of the same year they arrived safely in New York.\* Shortly after, they proceeded to Philadelphia.

Wissler lived but a short period after his arrival; Rubel was located in Philadelphia, where he became involved in serious diffi-

\* Schlatter's Life and Journal, pp. 231, 232.

culties, first with the synod, and afterward with his congregation, which resulted in the resignation of his charge and his withdrawal from the church; Stoy went first to Tulpehocken, and, becoming eventually involved in serious disputes with the synod or cœtus, he turned his attention partly to medicine, hunting, agriculture, and politics, and, being a man of talent and liberal culture, he exerted no inconsiderable influence in society; Waldschmid was located at Cocolico, and Otterbein at Lancaster.

## CHAPTER II.

## MR. OTTERBEIN'S MINISTRY AT LANCASTER.

IN August, 1752, Mr. Otterbein entered upon the duties of a pastor at Lancaster, Pa. He had now reached his twenty-seventh year. The congregation at Lancaster was large and disorderly. Owing to frequent vacancies, and unenlightened and incompetent pastors, "loose ideas and practices had come to prevail, and various irregularities, especially in regard to order and discipline." To one who, like Mr. Otterbein, was seeking the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel, and striving to be conformed, in heart and life, to the law of Christ, such a congregation could not fail to be the occasion of great grief and annoyance, as well as a spur to indefatigable reformatory labor.

To the great work before him, he devoted himself with all the ardor of his soul. The six years which followed were



fruitful of toils, trials, and conflicts, but also of great spiritual blessings; for, while he was employing all his resources to bring his people up to a purer and more scriptural mode of life, he was himself enabled, by grace, to enter into the complete liberty of the sons of God. For this blessing, his heart had long panted. Even before his departure from the Fatherland, his views upon the subject of vital, scriptural religion, were offensive to many of the Nicodemuses of the Palatinate.

"Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God," is a remarkably plain declaration, from the lips of Him who is the "Truth;" and experience uniformly testifies, that the human soul can never find permanent rest and peace until this change has been effected, and the Spirit of adoption has witnessed to the consciousness the dear relation of sons and daughters of the Lord, into which it introduces us. And yet, this plain and fundamental doctrine of the New Testament had been explained away or frittered down to a mere ceremony, or outward reformation, or abstraction, with most marvelous success, by Protestant divines, both in Europe and

America. Even masters in Israel, as in our Lord's day, when addressed upon the necessity and nature of the new birth, asked, with unbelieving ignorance, "How can these things be?"

Mr. Otterbein had not only felt the necessity of this change, but he had acquired a clear understanding of the nature and importance of the doctrine as taught in the inspired word. Hence, in his pulpit ministrations, he preached upon the subject in a manner which carried conviction to many hearts. Not long after he came to Lancaster, and immediately after he had preached one of his most searching discourses, a member of his congregation came to him in tears, bitterly lamenting his sins, and asked advice. Mr. Otterbein knew that this man was a sincere inquirer after the way of life, and yet, until he had entered into that way himself, he felt incompetent to direct him. But the visit of this penitent brought him to a crisis. Looking upon him sadly, yet tenderly, he only said, "My friend, advice is scarce with me to-day." The seeker went his way, and Mr. Otterbein repaired to his closet, and there wrestled, like Jacob, until he obtained the for-

givenness of his sins, the witness of the Holy Spirit of adoption, and was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Thus, after several years of earnest seeking for a higher spirituality, an awakened member of his own congregation, in tears, asking for advice, was made the means of causing him to press into the kingdom, as by violence.

The happy enlargement of Mr. Otterbein's spirituality, at Lancaster, enabled him to enter fully into the work of an evangelist, to point out clearly the way of salvation to others, to give "advice" to penitent sinners, and to sympathize with the spiritual children of God of all names and orders. How strange, yet it is true, from this important and interesting circumstance in his religious life may be dated a dissenting from him of some of his ministerial and other brethren in the church; and this difference increased as time advanced, and as he progressed in the knowledge and love of God, and contended earnestly, not so much for the formularies of the church as for the faith—the living, justifying faith, by which the soul is saved. ["Nach dem le-



bendigen, rechtfertigenden Glauben, der den Heiligen gegeben ist."]\*

His preaching, during the six years of his stay at Lancaster, was not without excellent results. Many persons were awakened to a sense of their lost condition, and were happily converted to God. Among this number, honorable mention may be made of Frederick Shaeffer, who subsequently became a useful minister in the United Brethren church, and, to the close of his long life, stood firmly at his post in the cause of Christ and in the church.†

Nevertheless, irregularity and irreligion continued to such an extent that they occasioned him great "grief and annoyance," and "discouraged him in his work."

Those who have read the history of revivals and attempted revivals in the old German churches, know how very difficult it is to reform them, and to bring them up any where near to the New Testament standard in experience and order. At the end of five years of unceasing labor, Mr. O. was anxious to withdraw from the charge. But the congregation, notwithstanding its

\* Spayth, p. 22.

† Ib. 22.

refractory character, was strongly attached to him, and was unwilling to let him go. The cœtus, or synod, interceded for them, and he was at length induced to remain. However, he was unwilling to enter "into an engagement for any definite period; and, after setting forth the grievances which had rendered his ministry unhappy, and frustrated much of the good which might have been done, he demanded, as the condition of his continuance, even for a limited term, *the exercise of a just ecclesiastical discipline, the abolition of all inordinacy, and entire liberty of conscience in the performances of his pastoral duties.*" All this was promised by the congregation.

Entertaining doubts of a reform, and yet willing to make one more trial, Mr. O. drew up a paper, which is still preserved, in his own handwriting, in the archives of the church at Lancaster, and presented the same to his congregation, for their signatures. We quote this paper entire:

"Inasmuch as, for some time, matters in our congregation have proceeded somewhat irregularly, and since we, in these circumstances, do not correctly know who they are that acknowledge themselves to be members

of our church, especially among those who reside out of town; we, the minister and officers of this church, have taken this matter into consideration, and find it necessary to request that every one who calls himself a member of our church, and who is concerned to lead a Christian life, should come forward and subscribe his name to the following Rules of Order:

"First of all, it is proper that those who profess themselves members should subject themselves to a becoming Christian church discipline, according to the order of Christ and his apostles; and thus to show respectful obedience to ministers and officers, in all things that are proper.

"Secondly: To the end that all disorder may be prevented, and that each member may be more fully known, each one, without exception, who desires to receive the Lord's Supper, shall, previous to the preparation service, upon a day appointed for that purpose, personally appear before the minister, that an interview may be held.

"No one will, by this arrangement, be deprived of his liberty, or be, in any way, bound oppressively. This we deem necessary to the preservation of order; and it is



our desire that God may bless it to this end. Whosoever is truly concerned to grow in grace, will not hesitate to subscribe his name."

From this paper, it is evident that Mr. Otterbein, at that early period of his ministry, had adopted those views of what ought to be the personal religious character of each member of the church, and the order and holiness of the church collectively, which had been entertained by Spener, Menno Simon, John Huss, the United Brethren, the Waldenses, and, indeed, first of all, by the apostles themselves. But these views were not generally entertained by the churches of that period. On the contrary, the grossest irregularity and immorality abounded in the churches, without let or hindrance. And this was the cause of Mr. Otterbein's severest trials, his eventual separation from the Reformed church, and of the organization of an independent congregation in Baltimore.

Eighty of the male members of the church at Lancaster subscribed to the paper drawn up by Mr. Otterbein, yet the evils were not cured, and, toward the close of the year 1758, he resigned his charge. Honorable

mention has been made of Mr. O.'s ministry at Lancaster, by those who have had no intelligent sympathy with the higher life into which he entered, and labored to bring the Reformed church. The author of the *Fathers of the Reformed Church*, before quoted, says that, "under his ministry, the old, small, wooden church, which stood in the back part of the graveyard, was superseded by a massive stone church, at the street, which was built in 1753, and only taken down in 1852, having stood almost a century. Internally, the congregation greatly prospered. Evidences of his order and zeal look out upon us, from the records in many ways; and enterprises, started in his time, have extended their results, in the permanent features of the congregation down to this day."

## CHAPTER III.

## MR. OTTERBEIN AT TULPEHOCKEN.

WHEN Mr. Otterbein resigned his charge at Lancaster, he purposed to re-visit the Fatherland; but the winter, which had already set in, and the continuance of the war between England and France, induced him to defer the execution of this purpose to a more favorable period. "Meanwhile, he took charge, temporarily, of two congregations in Tulpehocken, Berks county, Pa., where he continued for two years."

Tulpehocken is one of the richest and most beautiful portions of Pennsylvania; and the period of Mr. Otterbein's labors there among the most interesting of his life. At Lancaster he had been richly blessed, but, at the same time, greatly embarrassed. There were elements in that congregation which could not be brought into obedience to Christ. At Tulpehocken there was less opposition, and a greater



readiness to receive the truth; and more freedom of conscience and of action were accorded to the minister; and it was there that the outlines of the reformation of religion, which eventually separated him from the German Reformed Church,—a church which he venerated and loved,—became distinct and unmistakable.\*

Not content with preaching on the Sabbath, he made it his constant business, during the week, to go from house to house, converse with the people, kindly and pointedly, upon the subject of personal religion; advise, admonish, or encourage, as their cases might require, and then read, sing, and pray with them. He was an admirable family visitor. Dignified, yet humble in his manners, with a discriminating judgment, a tender heart, and a countenance beaming with benevolence, he readily won his way to every heart in the family circle.

Preaching "from house to house" was a new measure in this country. Other pastors may have made occasional visits to the members of their charge; or, they may have gone into families to catechise the

\* Spayth, p. 23.

children; but the visits of Otterbein, among the people at Tulpehocken, were of a totally different character. Like Paul at Ephesus, "day and night with tears, and from house to house," he labored to bring the people to Christ.

Another new measure, which he introduced at Tulpehocken, was evening meetings. At those meetings, his custom was to read a portion of Scripture, make some practical remarks on the same, and exhort all present to give place to serious reflections. He would then sing a sacred hymn, and invite all to kneel and accompany him in prayer. At first, and for some time, but few, if any, would kneel, and he was permitted to pray alone. This was in Pennsylvania, just one hundred years ago.

At the present period, when meetings for prayer are common in almost all churches, and when the voices of thousands and thousands are heard, in all our cities, at noon-day prayer-meetings, it can hardly be conceived that, a century ago, such meetings were scarcely known, and that, when introduced, they were denounced as "irregular," "unchurchly," and "fanatical" assemblies.

It may be well to observe that, at that

period, there was not a single Methodist church in America; and that the reformation, under Whitfield, had made little, if any, impression upon the German population. This item of history affords us a glimpse of the low type of religion which prevailed, and the thick darkness in which the people were sitting, at the commencement of Mr. Otterbein's revival labors.

At the evening meetings referred to, after prayer, Mr. Otterbein would endeavor to gain access to the hearts of the people, by addressing them, individually, with words of tenderness and love. This was another new and important measure, which was regarded, by many, as an unpardonable irregularity.

As might have been expected, the good seed, thus sown and watered, was blessed of God, and soon began to spring up and bear fruit, for "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Mr. Otterbein's heart was cheered, at Tulpehocken, by the fulfillment of this precious promise. But, as the marked effects of these meetings began to appear,—as some who attended



began to express a deep concern for the salvation of their souls, by weeping and lamenting their lost estate,—their propriety began to be called in question. "What does this mean!" said some, "the minister, and men and women kneel and pray, and weep, and call upon God, for Jesus' sake, to have mercy upon them! Who ever heard of such proceedings?" And yet these meetings were fairly introduced, never to be suspended, it is hoped, until all lands shall hear the glad tidings of salvation, and bud and blossom as the rose. Thank God, they were introduced; and, although the bitter reproaches of men, including some preachers and pastors, were cast upon them, they brought down richest blessings from heaven.\*

How could the Protestant churches and societies, which were favored with the pure word of God in their own tongue, have overlooked the numerous references therein contained to social prayer? And yet we have seen that pastors, preachers, and people, not a few, were found, who did not relish these meetings for prayer, but op-

\* Spayth, p. 24.

posed them as an innovation, and persecuted those who attended them.

In answer to these opponents, such passages of Holy Scripture as the following were introduced by Mr. Otterbein: "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."—Ps. 95: 6. "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."—Isa. 56: 7. "For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father." "I will, therefore, that men pray every-where."—(Paul.) "Where two or three are gathered together in my name."—(Jesus.) "Which are the prayers of the saints."—Rev. 5, 8: 8, 13. Nevertheless, this *kneeling* in prayer, and these meetings, *especially* for prayer and religious conference, on week days and evenings, met with much violent opposition, and from none more decided and bitter than from those who, from their sacred and holy calling, should have been prepared to give them their hearty and undivided support.

Prayer-meetings, attended as they are, when conducted in the spirit of faith, and meekness, and pure love, by the Holy One,

are a means of grace admirably adapted to bind the people of God together by the strong cords of Christian union, and to promote the blissful communion of the saints on earth. Prayer is one of the connecting links between the Creator and the creature, the Benefactor and the receiver, the Savior and the saved. It is the solace of the troubled spirit, dispelling the clouds that gather over it. It brightens the hope of future rest, and stimulates to a life of virtue and piety, and to acts of kindness to our fellow-men. Social, as well as private prayer, affords the sweetest and strongest supports amidst the trials and sorrows of life. In losses, in bereavements dark and desolate, when friends, and health, and wealth are gone, and comforts are fled, prayer, leaning upon hope, tarries with us, and affords substantial succor and relief.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gate of death,—  
He enters heaven by prayer."

The prayer-meetings introduced by Mr. Otterbein at Tulpehocken, in 1758, afforded important aid to the blessed reformation which had been commenced among the people. "This is attested by witnesses on



earth and in heaven; and it remains yet to be proven, that the reformation of the world can be prosecuted with any tolerable degree of success, or a church, however strong or well established, maintain its vitality, and continue to be a light in the world, and be instrumental in the conversion of sinners, in the absence of these meetings as a secondary means of grace."\*

\* Spayth, pp. 25, 26.

## CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN BOEHM.

WHILE the work of reformation was advancing under the labors of Mr. Otterbein, at Tulpehocken, the Lord was preparing, in another place, and among another people, one of the chief instruments of the religious movement which is the subject of this history.

The apostles and evangelists were chosen from various occupations, positions, and professions. Peter was a fisherman; Matthew, a publican; Luke, a physician; and Paul, a learned doctor of the law. Some of these had the advantages of the finest mental culture which the best schools of their time afforded; others were ignorant and unlearned men; but all were endowed with excellent common sense. And it may be remarked, that all the great revivals of religion, which illuminate the pages of eccle-

siastical history, have been effected by the blessing of God on the joint labors of educated and uneducated ministers. This statement will, we are confident, bear the test of facts, is in accordance with sound philosophy, and harmonizes with the inspired record.

We have just left a young man, with a university education, at Tulpehocken, visiting from house to house, holding prayer and conference meetings through the week, and, on the Lord's day, preaching a present and full salvation, in Jesus Christ, from sin, with apostolic power and unction. He was the St. Paul among the fathers of the United Brethren ministry. Before we proceed to notice more fully the circumstances under which the church of the United Brethren in Christ was eventually formed, we will give some particulars of the life and labors of MARTIN BOEHM, who was born and educated on a farm, and who may be termed the St. Peter among the fathers of the Brethren ministry.

Martin Boehm was born in Lancaster county, Pa., A. D. 1725, one year prior to the birth of Otterbein. His grandfather, Jacob Boehm, a native of Switzerland, was



a member of the Reformed church. When a young man, and while traveling as a journeyman tradesman, he became acquainted with the Mennonites, and a convert to their doctrines, and, it is believed, also experimentally acquainted with Christ. The Mennonites, as we have seen from a sketch of their history, in Part First of this volume, were, at that period, among the most enlightened and spiritual people in Europe. Menno Simonis, who, but a short time previous to the conversion of Jacob Boehm, had closed his arduous life of evangelical toil, in doctrine and discipline, approached nearer the apostolic standard than either Luther or Calvin. Nevertheless, the Mennonites were the objects of a most relentless persecution. Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics alike regarded them with abhorrence, and killed them without pity.

The leaven of popery, alas! still worked in the bosom of the reformed churches, and, hence, the Mennonites, even in Switzerland, were hunted down with a ferocity which is almost inconceivable. "The favorite mode of punishing them, especially at Berne, was by drowning them. This manner of death was deemed the most appropri-

ate, because it was only baptizing them in their own way."\* The rivers and lakes, which abounded in Switzerland, often received the dead bodies of these devoted people. But, as the drowning of them only increased their number, the "council of Berne being embarrassed," as all bloody persecutors have been, resorted to measures less severe, and, "acting under the advice of the ministers," published, in 1533, an edict, announcing that they should be "left in peace, if they would *keep their belief to themselves*, AND MAINTAIN SILENCE; but that, if they continued to preach and keep up a separate sect, they should not be any more condemned to death, *but only to perpetual imprisonment on BREAD AND WATER.*"

When Jacob Boehm's father was informed of his conversion to the faith of the Mennonites, he was, as we may well suppose, greatly exasperated; and he resolved that he should be thrust into prison. Before he was imprisoned, however, advised by an elder brother, he fled into Holland, where, under the shade of William of Orange, liberty of conscience and of worship were accorded to Christians of all denominations. Finding a

\* De Haller, pp. 39, 69.

secure home in Holland, he married, and raised a large family, a part of whom emigrated to America, and, among the number, Martin Boehm's father, whose name was also Jacob.

But the great temporal prosperity which fell to the lot of the Mennonites, in Holland, was not favorable to their spirituality; and, at the end of two centuries, although a very high degree of morality was preserved among them, few, comparatively, enjoyed the light and liberty of the sons of God. Martin's parents were strict and conscientious observers of the rules of the Mennonite society; and he was, therefore, trained up under a religious influence, carefully instructed in the doctrine and discipline, and, in due time, by baptism and partaking of the Lord's Supper, was made a member of the Mennonite church.

Fully satisfied with his brethren and religious profession, he lived a blameless life; that is, without sinning knowingly, according to the light he then had, until the thirty-second year of his age. At that period it occurred that a preacher was to be chosen in the immediate society of which he was a member, according to the custom of the Mennonites, which is by lot.



"We will now give Martin Boehm's own account of his awakening and religious experience, as nearly in his own words as the idiom of the language will allow in translating.\*

'When nominated, I had no desire that the lot might fall on me, and I earnestly besought my brethren to nominate some one in my place, better than myself. This, however, was not done, and the moment came when each nominee was to step forth and take a book. I stepped out, saying inwardly, Lord, not me. I am too poor. The books were opened, and the lot or token was mine! Believing, as I did, that this lot falls by divine appointment, I did not feel myself at liberty to refuse obedience to its decision, but felt constrained by my conscience to take upon myself the office of the ministry, and discharge it as best I could.

'According to our usage it was not expected from me to preach immediately thereafter, because our elder preacher was still able to preach; but it was my duty to assist him in preaching and exhortation as God would give me ability. I had been reading the Scriptures much, but now read them still more,

\* Spayth, pp. 28, 29, 30, 31.

and with care, in order to impress their reading on my memory, so that I might have something wherewith to preach or exhort. Sunday came, the elder brother preached; and, in attempting to follow him by a word of exhortation, I failed, although for some two years past, I had been giving testimony at the close of the sermons, and frequently concluded the meetings. I continued reading. The next Sabbath I was requested to take part, and rose up, but could say little or nothing. I had charged my mind and memory with some Scripture passages, but, when wanted, could not bring them to my recollection. I prayed to the Lord to assist me in retaining his word, and strengthen me in my great weakness, that, to some extent at least, I might answer his call.

‘Some months passed in this way, but it came not. This state began deeply to distress me—to be a preacher, and yet have nothing to preach, nor to say, but stammer out a few words, and then be obliged to take my seat in shame and remorse! I had faith in prayer, and prayed more fervently. While thus engaged in praying earnestly for aid to preach, the thought rose in my mind, or as though one spoke to me, saying, You pray

for grace to teach others the way of salvation, and you have not prayed for your own salvation. This thought or word did not leave me. *My salvation*, followed me wherever I went. I felt constrained to pray for myself; and, while praying for myself, my mind became alarmed. I felt and saw myself a poor sinner. I was LOST! My agony became great. I was plowing in the field, and kneeled down at each end of the furrow, to pray. The word *lost, lost (verlohren)*, went every round with me. Midway in the field I could go no further, but sank behind the plow, crying, Lord save, I am lost!—and again the thought or voice said, I am come to seek and to save that which is lost. In a moment, a stream of joy was poured over me. I praised the Lord, and left the field, and told my companion what joy I felt.

‘As before this I wished the Sabbath far off, now I wished it was to-morrow. Sunday came: the elder brother preached. I rose to tell my experience, since my call to the ministry. When speaking of my lost estate, and agony of mind, some in the congregation began to weep. This gave me encouragement to speak of our fall and lost condition, and of repentance. The Sabbath following it was



the same, and much more. Before I was done, I found myself in the midst of the congregation, where some were weeping aloud!

'This caused considerable commotion in our church, as well as among the people generally. It was all new; none of us had heard or seen it before. A new creation appeared to rise up before me, and around me. Now Scripture, before mysterious, and like a dead letter to me, was plain of interpretation; was all spirit, all life, (*alles geist und leben.*)

'Like a dream, old things had passed away, and it seemed as if I had awoke to new life, new thoughts, new faith, new love. I rejoiced and praised God with my whole heart. This joy, this faith, this love, I wished to communicate to those around me; but, when speaking thereof, in public or in private, it made different impressions on different persons. Some gave a mournful look, some sighed and wept, and would say, Oh! Martin, are we indeed lost?

'Yes, man (*der mensch*) is lost! Christ will never find us, till we know that we are lost. My wife was the next lost sinner that felt the same joy, the same love.'"

"It was a rich treat, to hear this father in Israel tell of his call to the ministry; how

he shrank from it when proposed, and how it resulted in his finding Jesus, the lost sinner's friend, and the joy he felt when the burden of sin was taken away. Of this he loved to speak in his old age, and would recur to it with an animation peculiar to himself. To see his eyes light up, and his whole countenance assume, for the time, a youthful appearance, in contrast with his snowy locks and rich white beard, was a sight, which a pen dipped in liquid light could not describe: it had to be seen to be appreciated. 'Now I am,' he would say, 'a *servant* and a *child* of God. When this took place, I knew of no one who had felt and enjoyed the sweet influence of the love of God in the heart, but Nancy Keagy, my mother's sister. In our family connection, and in her immediate neighborhood, she was known as a very pious woman, and she was pious.'

"M. Boehm's call to the ministry, and his conversion soon after, took place in the year 1758.

"Between the years 1750 and 1760, numerous Mennonite families removed from the State of Pennsylvania, to what was then called New Virginia, and dispersed themselves through Frederick, Shenandoah, Rockingham, and Au-

gusta counties. Owing to their scattered state, and the newness of the settlements, they were destitute of preaching generally; and particularly of their own choice. Of this they had little except what was afforded by preachers visiting them occasionally from Pennsylvania. In the year 1761, brother M. Boehm was called to Virginia, by some of his Mennonite brethren, who resided there. But previous to this call, some converts of the eminent George Whitfield had reached New Virginia, and had commenced preaching a present salvation. With others, some members of the Mennonite families became seriously affected, through the preaching of these 'New Lights,' as they were then called, for the want of a better name.

"Now here the Germans were in a dilemma, which, in their opinion, and according to the light they had, required the presence and advice of those in whom they had confidence; that is, their own preachers. Hence the call of Martin Boehm, at this particular time. To illustrate, we will select a case which will answer in place of many, characteristic of the state and views of religion among the Germans at that period.

"The daughter of a brother Keller had



become much affected, by hearing the 'New Lights' preach on one or two occasions. There, in that house of Bro. K.'s, you see a young person apparently in deep distress, although surrounded by kind parents, neighbors, and friends, who, in their turn, endeavor, by words and arguments, to cheer, chide, or, laugh the mourner into a pleasant mood.

"Well," said the kind father; for he was, in his way of thinking, a good man, and a good Christian in the Mennonite sense of the word, 'well, my child, what ails you? Are you sick? Do you wish to have a physician?'

"No, dear father, no doctor; my heart is sick."

"Say not so, your heart is not sick."

"O my heart, my heart is sick. God is displeased with me. O my father, what shall I do? I am lost!"

"This agony of mind distressed the good parents much; but how the daughter could be sick at heart—why God should be displeased with their child, and why or how, this dear daughter could be lost, was in no way clear to them. Yet, evidently, she was suffering not unlike a criminal about to be delivered into the hands of justice, crying for

mercy, often saying, 'Oh! is there no mercy for me?' The best and only reply she received was, 'You are not lost. God loves you. *Mercy*—what do you mean by mercy? You are not wicked—never was. You are a believer. Come, now, no more crying. Why? Wherefore do you weep?'

"This was repeated to her so often, that she finally sat in silence; and the fountain of tears either became exhausted, or refused to come to her relief. No one came to pray with her, and direct her mind to the blessed Savior.

"At this crisis Boehm arrived. After salutations had passed, and refreshments had been taken, Boehm, in conversation with Keller, inquired how matters stood in religion. Keller replied, 'Most of us are doing well, but some new doctrine has of late been preached by men here about, which has caused some disturbance among us.'

"'And what do those men preach?'

"'What they preach is rather more than I can tell you, but it is different from what we have ever heard. Our daughter, about two months since, was to their meeting, and has not been like herself since.'

“‘And for two months she has been to no preaching?’

“‘No, we could not think of letting her go, and have wished she had never heard those people; and, as we have written you, there are others of our people just like her, melancholy and dejected, and all we can get them to say is, we are lost (*verlohren*), we have no true religion; and for this reason we have sent for you, believing that they would be advised by our own preachers, and dismiss their gloomy thoughts.’

“‘And where is that daughter of yours?’

“‘Why,’ answered the mother, ‘there you see she is, and has not spoken a word to any of us to-day.’

“Boehm said he now moved his chair by her side, and sought to draw from herself the state and exercises of her mind. She listened to him for some time in silence, breathing at intervals a deep sigh. Soon the fountain of her tears was opened again, and she began to weep aloud, and said: ‘Is it possible that you, a stranger, know what I have felt and suffered for weeks, and you believe that I am a sinner, that I am lost?’

“‘Yes, I know this my daughter, but I know Jesus came to seek and to save that



which is lost; and he is come to find you, and to save you to-night yet. Do you believe in Jesus?"

"'Yes, I believe Jesus Christ lives; but have I not offended him? Will he not come and judge the world and me? Oh, that he would but save me!'"

"'Come,' said Boehm, 'we will kneel down and pray.' They kneeled down. The agony of Miss Keller was great. She cried, 'Lord, save, or I perish!'"

"'Yes,' said Boehm, 'hold to that, he will save, and that speedily;' and so it was. She was blest, and all her sorrow was gone,—dissolved in joy.

"Seeing this, her mother cried out, 'Martin, Martin! what have you done? Why did you come? What will become of us now?'"

"'Yes,' replied her husband, 'what will become of us? We, too, are lost!'"

"That night was a night of mourning, and a night of joy for that house, for the morning light found them all rejoicing in the love of God!

"This scene proved a great blessing to Bro. Boehm. Before he left Virginia, many more were brought under the saving influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

thus the families speaking the German language in that valley, saw the dawn of that light, which since then, and to this day, has shone with a peculiar splendor upon the people at large in that happy region, from whence clouds of witnesses have already passed into happier climes.

"As before remarked, Mr. Boehm's visit to Virginia was of great importance to himself. He there learned a lesson of experience from the good Master, which he could not so soon nor so effectually have learned at home; hence we can well fancy with what feelings, with what inspired thoughts and hopes he returned to his own. Timidity, and the fear of offending his elder brethren, he said, was much removed. He was confirmed in the truth and correctness of his own experience. He became satisfied that men every-where must repent, and that this repentance must be accompanied by a godly sorrow, deeply felt; and that there can be no rest, no peace, no hope, and no faith, without it. He further remarked, with much earnestness, that after his return, he felt 'an impression, or a presentiment that God would visit his people, and give them repentance unto life.' He had news to tell his friends

at home, of what he had witnessed in Virginia; that there, too, he found and saw persons, some young, and some advanced in life, who felt themselves *lost*, some of whom had nearly despaired of obtaining grace and mercy, believing themselves the chief of sinners; that many had been blest, and had rejoiced in Jesus Christ their Savior, before he left. He could tell them how affecting their parting was,—what sympathy, what brotherly love, what melting of hearts!

“This year and the two years following, were years of joy to Mr. Boehm, while preaching repentance in the Spirit, and from experience. God was with him, and he did not preach without effect. The Spirit accompanied the word with power. Pungent convictions extorted the cry, *LOST*; and those convictions were followed by happy conversions.

“Sabbath preaching was not sufficient now to supply the wants of the many who were inquiring,—‘What must we do?’ Hence meetings began to be held on week days, and some by candle-light. This was another step toward the great reformation; and here we remark, as we pass, the similarity and likeness of the manner in which Otterbein and Boehm were led on by the Spirit, and



providential circumstances as they presented themselves; and how each laid hold of those circumstances to promote the cause of God, and meet the wants of the people, who thirsted for salvation, and a deliverance from bondage, and from sin!"

## CHAPTER V.

## GREAT UNION MEETING—"WE ARE BRETHREN!"

WILLIAM OTTERBEIN and Martin Boehm were brought into the complete liberty of the sons of God, near the same period of time, and at places not far distant from each other. But they were members of churches very widely separated; indeed, no two churches in the world, perhaps, stood farther apart than the Reformed and the Mennonite. The Reformed, not a little puffed up with churchly pride, inherited from Romanism, looked upon the Mennonites with ill-concealed disdain; and, indeed, regarded them as no church at all, but as a sect,—a contemptible sect. The Mennonites, on their part, still cherished the recollection of the cruel wrongs and persecutions which their fathers had suffered from the Reformed church in Europe, and regarded that church, with its high sacramental notions, its paid and—too often—

proud ministry, and its loose discipline, as being little better than Romanism itself.

True religion, however, is a unit—"one Lord, one faith, one baptism"—and Otterbein and Boehm, so widely separated from each other by education, habits of life, and church relations, had each found the "one Lord," the one justifying and sanctifying "faith," and had received the "one baptism" of love and power. Alike they rejoiced in a present and full salvation from sin, which they faithfully proclaimed to others; and, therefore, that they might be perfectly united in the strong bonds of Christian fellowship, it was only necessary that they should be brought together and form an acquaintance.

As we have already seen, the blessing of God attended Mr. Otterbein's labors while he was at Lancaster; and, in a still more remarkable manner, after his removal to Tulpehocken. While at the latter place, he made frequent visits to other points; and wherever he labored, the people were moved, and many were awakened and brought into the kingdom of Christ. His influence, however, up to this period, was confined, principally, to persons who ad-



hered to the German Reformed and Lutheran churches. Mr. Boehm, on the other hand, had found an open door, in places, among the Mennonites, many of whom heard him gladly, and welcomed him as a true preacher of that pure Gospel for which thousands of the primitive Mennonites had joyfully surrendered their lives. His influence was also extended to the Tunkers and Amish, German societies kindred to the Mennonites, among whom some converts were made.

Thus, two precious revivals of religion were in progress at the same time, in the same state, and among a people speaking the same language; and, thus far, they had flowed in separate channels. The time was near, however, when He who holds the rivers in his hands, should cause them to flow together, and, henceforth, to constitute but one stream.

A great meeting (*grosze versammlung*) was appointed, probably by Boehm, to be held at ISAAC LONG'S, in Lancaster county, Pa.; and to it all Christians, of all sects and denominations, were invited. When the time appointed had arrived, the Lord's children, who were scattered abroad in va-

rious communions, moved by love, flocked together from far and near. There were in attendance members of the Lutheran, German Reformed, Mennonite, Tunker, and Amish, and, perhaps, of some other persuasions. By far the greater part of those who "stood on good ground," had been brought into fellowship with Jesus, through the instrumentality of Otterbein and Boehm, and were, consequently, rejoicing in their first love. It is more than probable, however, that some aged Christians were there who, twenty years before, had heard the word of life from such men as good Henry Antes and Zinzendorf, and had united with them in the "Congregation of God in the Spirit." Many of God's children were thus, for the first time, brought happily together in a worshiping assembly.

One may well suppose that, on such an occasion, a very high degree of interest would be manifested, especially in those who had, in heart, entered fully into the revival; and that self-examination and humiliation before God, and an unusual spirit of prayer for a Pentecostal baptism, would be excited.

At this meeting Otterbein and Boehm met for the first time. They were both in the vigor of manhood. Boehm was of small

stature, wore his beard long, and was dressed in the plain Mennonite costume. Otterbein, on the contrary, was a large man, of commanding person, wearing the ordinary clerical dress. There was a striking contrast in the *personnel* of the two men.

"Boehm preached the first sermon, at the close of which, and before he had time to resume his seat, Otterbein arose, and, folding him in his arms, said, with a loud voice, 'WE ARE BRETHREN!'"

The effect produced by this touching expression of Christian fellowship and union, taking into account the ecclesiastical relations of the ministers, the character of the large congregation, the times, and the simple, stirring eloquence of the sermon just pronounced, can better be imagined than described. The scene would form a picture worthy the pencil of the most skillful artist.

Unable to repress their emotions, some in the congregation praised God aloud; but the greater part were bathed in tears, and all hearts seemed melted into one. The reader can not fail to be reminded of a union meeting of a similar character, and of like results, which marked the *renewal* of the Unit-



ed Brethren, at Herrnhut, in 1727.\* And he will also call to mind the union conventions of 1741-42, brought together by the same spirit which animated the meetings inaugurated at Isaac Long's, and composed of similar ecclesiastical elements, gathered from the same region of country.†

This meeting, and the peculiar circumstances attending it under the harmonizing influence of the Spirit, which operated so effectually in uniting people, hitherto so widely separated, in one common and sacred bond of brotherhood, under the great Head of the church, free from party strife and feeling, gave rise to the application, for the fourth time, of the name, "UNITED BRETHREN," to which "IN CHRIST" was afterward added,—a name which the people, thus united, several years afterward, in official conference, adopted.‡

\* Page 89.      † Page 111.      ‡ See Spayth, p. 41.

## CHAPTER VI.

MR. O. AT FREDERICK.—GEORGE A. GUETHING.

TOWARD the close of the year 1760, Mr. Otterbein accepted a call from the Reformed church in Frederick, Maryland. While at Tulpehocken, he had made occasional visits to that charge, to supply, in part, the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Steiner. The Reformed congregation at Frederick was large, and remote from other portions of the church; and Mr. O. was induced to accept the call of the congregation, mainly because it had been difficult, on account of its location, to supply it with pastoral labor. His labors there, as in every other place, were attended by heaven's blessings. Rev. Dr. Zacharias, pastor of the same church in 1847, in a centenary sermon delivered that year, bears the following testimony to his moral worth, and pastoral faithfulness and success in Frederick:—

"During Mr. Otterbein's labors in Frederick, the church in which we now worship was built; also the parsonage, which has been the successive residence of your pastors ever since. Many other improvements, in the external condition of this congregation, were likewise made during this period; thus showing that Mr. O. was not only a very pious and devoted pastor, but was also most energetic and efficient in promoting the outward prosperity of the church.

"A few letters are still preserved in our archives, written by Mr. O. while at York, to members of this charge. From these letters, brief as they are, you may easily gather the spirit of the man. Though laboring now in another field, he remembered still, with affectionate kindness and concern, the people whom he had recently left. He mourned over their difficulties, and endeavored to profit them by imparting unto them his godly counsels, and offering up, in their behalf, his earnest prayers."

But earnest and successful as were Mr. O.'s labors in Frederick, they were not unattended with the usual difficulties and con-



flicts which awaited him during the whole of the period which succeeded his conversion at Lancaster, and preceded the establishment of an independent congregation in Baltimore. The catholic spirit which he exhibited, in extending the hand of fellowship to Christians of all denominations, and in fraternizing with "unlearned" and "irregular" preachers whom the Lord had raised up among the converted people, the searching character of his sermons, and the strictness of the discipline which he wished enforced, excited, at times, very great opposition to him in the church at Frederick, which, like too many of the Reformed and Lutheran churches of that period, was composed very largely of unconverted persons. At one period, the excitement became so great that a majority of the church determined on his summary dismissal; and, to effect it most speedily, they locked the church door against him. On the following Sabbath, when the congregation assembled, his adherents, knowing that he had a legal right to the pulpit, were disposed to force the door; but he said to them—"Not so, brethren. If I am not permitted to enter the church peaceably, I

can and will preach here in the graveyard." So saying, he took his stand upon one of the tombstones, proceeded with the regular introductory services in his usual fervent spirit, delivered a sermon of remarkable power, and, at its close, announced preaching for the same place, on the succeeding Sabbath. At the time appointed, an unusually large concourse assembled, and as he was about to commence the services again under the canopy of the heavens, the person who had the key of the church door, hastily opened it, saying, "Come in, come in! I can stand this no longer." But this was not the only, or the last instance in which the doors of Reformed churches were locked against him.

A man of Mr. Otterbein's zeal for souls could not confine his labors to a single town. The great destitution of the people impelled him to go out and proclaim the glad tidings wherever a door was opened. One of the places visited in his itinerant excursions was situated on the Antietam, a small stream which empties into the Potomac. At this place his labors were blessed in a remarkable manner, and he did not cease to visit it until near the close of his life. Perhaps

no spot on earth became dearer to him than the Antietam.

Soon after the good work of evangelization had been commenced, a young man was converted there, and afterward introduced into the ministry, who deserves more than a passing notice in the history of the United Brethren in Christ. His name was GEORGE ADAM GUETHING. He was born in Nassau Siegerland Neiderschelde, Germany, February 6th, A. D. 1741. In his 18th year he emigrated to America; and, on the Antietam, he found employment during the summer, in quarrying stone and digging wells, and, in the winter, in teaching school. He was not a thorough scholar; yet he read Latin well, and his literary attainments were quite respectable. A short time after his settlement at Antietam, he was made acquainted with the Lord, and was filled with that divine love which, as a pure and quenchless flame, burned upon the altar of his heart until the very close of his life. Although quite a youth at the time of his conversion, it soon became evident that he was a chosen vessel of the Lord.

As long intervals necessarily elapsed between Mr. Otterbein's visits to Antietam, the



people were encouraged to assemble themselves together, in his absence, for prayer and religious conference. At these meetings, the gifts and graces of Mr. Guething were called into exercise, with excellent results; and he was requested, still further to supply the lack of regular pastoral services, by selecting and reading a sermon on the Sabbath, when no preacher was present. With this request he complied; and, as he was a good reader, and entered into the spirit of the discourses, the people were gratified and instructed.

It was not long until Otterbein, who began to feel the pressing need of evangelical co-laborers, to aid in carrying forward the good work of reformation which was spreading in all directions, discovered that God had set his seal upon the ruddy-faced German youth, and he determined to bring him, at once, into the work. Believing that a man called of God to the ministry, should *preach*, and not *read*, sermons, he directed that one of the brethren, on the ensuing Sabbath, should remove the book from Mr. Guething's hands, and throw him at once upon his own resources, and the help of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, at

the appointed hour, as the young man arose to read, at the place marked, a brother stepped forward and took the book from his hands in a manner which gave him to understand what was desired in the place of a printed sermon. The result fully justified Mr. Otterbein's estimate of his gifts and talents. He addressed the people with touching simplicity and pathos, and brought tears from every eye.\* From that day forward, preaching was the work of his life; and he became, in a few years, an influential and effective co-laborer of Mr. Otterbein and Boehm, in the great work which had been so well commenced.†

"The talent and ministerial graces of these three brethren, Otterbein, Boehm, and Guething, can not now be adequately estimated; it is beyond our ability to give the reader a perfect idea of them.

"Otterbein was argumentative, eloquent, and often terrible in the denunciation of sin. In the elucidation of the Scriptures, clear and thorough, few being his equal in these respects.

\* These facts are gleaned from a MS. in the hand-writing of his son, preserved in the Telescope office.

† He was presented to the cœtus or synod, for admission, by Mr. Otterbein; and was received, and afterward regularly ordained, by William Hendel, sen., and Mr. Otterbein.

"Boehm was the plain, open, frank expounder of God's word; of ready utterance, having a clear and strong voice; and, being full of life and animation, he often carried his congregations before him as if they had been borne along by a resistless current.

"But Guething was like an early spring sun rising on a frost-silvered forest, which gradually affords more light and heat, until you begin to hear the crackling of the ice-covered branches, the dripping of the melted snow, as it were a shower of rain, and until a smiling, joyous day appears. So did Guething enlighten and melt the hearts of his congregations, by the word of truth, and so did the shouts of praise for redeeming grace follow floods of penitential tears. He was the St. John of this clover leaf, if the reader will allow the comparison; always

\*Affectionate in look,

And tender in address, as well becomes

A messenger of grace to guilty men ;\*

of good parts, having a well-cultivated mind; in conversation cheerful, pleasing, and interesting; and every way a desirable companion. His winning manners and shin-



ing talents secured for him universal respect and esteem, good congregations, and what was much more important, access to the hearts and consciences of those who came to hear him. He would follow the sinner in his devious paths, showing the severity of God's holy law in a manner which made stout hearts to quail and tremble; and then, with feelings and language peculiar to himself, present to the stricken-hearted a loving Savior, and in tones so beseechingly sweet, that the effect was invariably a congregation in penitential tears. Here was the secret power which he possessed over an audience. All who ever heard him, saw it—felt it; he alone seemed to be unconscious of it. But love and a childish good nature, like the rays of an evening sun, resting quietly on his round face, was all that could be seen of the highly gifted mind, in the midst of sinners crying for mercy, or saints shouting for joy. Many were awakened under the preaching of brother Guething, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

“But withal, he was not left without opponents in the course of his Gospel labors and journeyings. Having been brought up

in the German Reformed church, that church was held dear in his affections, nor was this without a return from many members in that church, to whom his preaching had been made the power of God unto salvation. He likewise enjoyed the friendship and esteem of some of her preachers; but from that church came also some of his severest trials, by way of opposition to the work of grace and the conversion of the people. And as opposition or persecution which comes from those with whom we have been associated or united, in natural, social, and religious relations, cuts with a keener edge, and wounds deeper than when directed against us from any other source, Mr. Guething, when speaking of it, while the big tears dropped from his eyes, would say, 'For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt. Oh! what a Savior we have, and yet the health of my people is not recovered!'

"Great meetings, such as were inaugurated at Isaac Long's, were held at an early day, in his immediate neighborhood, and so continued, from time to time, while he lived, and long after the time of his earthly life. Otterbein was nearly always

present at those meetings, until infirmity and age forbade attendance. Brother Guething's house was Otterbein's retreat,—his head quarters when out of Baltimore. Perhaps never loved two men better, nor for a longer period of time, than Otterbein and Guething loved each other. Brother Guething's was also the council house for the preachers, far and near. He was much looked to for counsel, for advice and instruction; and such was the love toward him, and the confidence in him, that his word had much of the authority of law, and his counsel was as the counsel of the ancients; and this was given on his part with such humility and tenderness of love, that the impression could never be forgotten nor effaced. But Brother Guething was a man, nor is it meant that he was faultless; but such as he was, God had raised him up for a great work. How faithfully he performed the work allotted to him, in the history of the Brethren church, was exemplified in the forty years of his illustrious life, spent joyfully in the service of his Divine Master."\* We shall meet him frequently in the succeeding pages.

\* Spayth, pp. 60, 61, 62.



## CHAPTER VII.

## OTHER LABORERS—CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.

It is now time to direct attention to a very important measure, adopted subsequent to the great meeting at Isaac Long's,—a measure evidently sanctioned by heaven, but which brought upon Mr. Otterbein the severest censures, and some of his heaviest persecutions. It relates to the introduction of what has been termed, in modern times, a "lay ministry;" we prefer to designate it, *a God-called ministry*.

As already stated, although Mr. Otterbein was a settled pastor, yet he labored extensively as an evangelist; and, during the spring and autumn of each year, especially, he held, in conjunction with Mr. Boehm, many large meetings. Those meetings usually continued from Saturday until Monday; and they were the means of salvation to hundreds of souls. People far and near attended them; some to scoff, but many to hear and pray. Societies were generally organized at, or near the

places where they were held, which demanded some kind of pastoral oversight. And cases like the following, frequently occurred. A truly converted man, living in the midst of a large community of unconverted church members, people and preacher alike blind,—hearing of a meeting to be held by the reformers, attends. To do so, he travels twenty or thirty miles. While listening to the word of God from the lips of Otterbein and Boehm, tears of joy run down his cheeks. His love, and faith, and zeal, are quickened. “O this precious Gospel,” he says, “must be preached to my neighbors,” and he entreats the ministers to appoint a meeting in his barn or woods. An appointment is made, and another society is formed. Another man is attracted to a great meeting by curiosity; but he is awakened and converted. He goes home, and tells his neighbors what God has done for him. The simple story disturbs the carnal slumbers of others, and at length a meeting for prayer is appointed, and a revival breaks out. A converted preacher must be obtained, because the “regular” pastor has never tasted redeeming grace, and bitterly opposes the work. Urgent calls are therefore sent to Mr. Otterbein or to Mr. Boehm. But these become

too numerous. More laborers must be secured. The Lord of the harvest is entreated to send them forth; and he does send them forth.

It may be laid down as a truth, that a living church will always have a full supply of living ministers. Among the converts to Jesus of this period, and of the quarter of a century following, preachers of the Gospel were raised up who would have done honor to any church. Hence, when converts were found who were deeply pious, and had gifts, and who felt moved upon by the Spirit to exhort or preach, they were encouraged to go forward; and after they had been well tried and approved, a license to preach, signed by Mr. Otterbein and Mr. Boehm, was granted them. By this means the infant societies were strengthened, the numerous calls for evangelical preaching answered, and the word of the Lord published abroad.

One of the earliest and most successful of these early preachers, was CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER. He was born in Lancaster county, Pa., Jan. 21st, A. D. 1749. His father, Wolfgang Newcomer, was a native of Switzerland, but was brought to this country in his childhood. His parents were both pious mem-



bers of the Mennonite society, in which were still to be found remains of that ardent piety which, two hundred years before, had blazed up gloriously under the labors of Menno Simons. "I do recollect," says Mr. Newcomer, in his journal, "perfectly well, that I have seen them both on their knees, many a time, before the bed, offering up prayers or evening sacrifice to God, although in silence." \* \* "At a certain time I was present when they held a conversation respecting my grandmother. They said she was very sad and melancholy, in great doubts about the salvation of her soul, and in distress for fear of being lost; adding that she ought not to do so, but cast herself on the mercy of the Lord her God."\*

This conversation made a deep impression on his mind. In a sketch of his experience he wrote:—"Ah!" said I to myself, "if such persons as my pious grandmother, (for I considered her a pious character,) do lament and are in distress on account of their salvation, what will become of me? how shall I appear before the great Judge of all the universe, to give an account of all that I

\* We quote from his Journal, published in 1834.

have done? This impression lasted a considerable time."

At a later period he wrote:—"O! how many thoughts and dreams of judgment and eternity, disturbed my mind. I could see no way how I could be saved; reasoning with myself in this manner,—where so many are lost, and so few saved, thou also wilt be lost. This conclusion bore so heavily on my mind, as to almost distract me; being convinced of my sad condition, and knowing no way to make my escape, or accomplish a delivery. In the mean time, the grace of God continued to work powerfully in my heart. I formed resolution after resolution, to forsake sin and do better, but, alas! all availed not; before I was aware, sin led me captive again. Frequently did I endeavor to pray, in my ignorance of the plan of salvation; willingly would I believe and persuade myself that I was one of the happy number which are saved. I soon made the discovery, however, that I still continued in the captivity of sin and Satan, the terror of a sin-avenging God, and the fear of hell; and my own turbulent passions continued to sway their power without any perceivable abatement. I remember once being in a field at work,

when the grace of God wrought such powerful conviction in my heart, that I went down on my knees in a hollow place in the field, crying to the Lord and saying, O! thou blessed Savior! I will cheerfully believe in thee, for thou art my Redeemer, and I am the purchase of thy most precious blood: but something within insinuated doubts, saying, how canst thou believe thyself one of the redeemed, when thou knowest thyself ensnared and held in captivity by sin? Alas! I did not know that I dared, or was permitted to come to Jesus Christ in my miserable and sinful state.

"The conviction of my guilt and sin still continued to harass my poor, though sin-sick soul, and it appeared to me that every individual could read my lost condition in legible characters in my countenance. O! how often have I expressed the wish that I never had been born; but as yet I was ignorant of the blessed Redeemer, the loving Jesus.

"Often did I dream concerning the day of judgment: especially did I dream once of standing on an extensive, open, and level piece of ground; on all sides, and in every direction, as far as the eye could pierce, there appeared a multitude of people; on a



sudden the thunders began to roar in a most wonderful manner, and I thought the day of judgment at hand. In a moment I saw the Lord Jesus come down from Heaven in his glory—methought he seized me by the arm and drew me forcibly to him; with this I awoke, and instantly leaped out of bed; a ray of hope darted through my mind—perhaps, said I to myself, there is still mercy for poor, unworthy me.

“Sometime thereafter, a very heavy tempest arose one evening, in the western horizon; presently the whole canopy of Heaven was a black darkness;—tremendous thunder following, clap after clap, and the forked lightning illuminated the objects around me, making darkness visible:—this, said I to myself, is, perhaps, the day of judgment, of which I have lately dreamed. O! what anguish, fear, and terror, took possession of my heart; I walked from room to room, tried to read and to pray, all to no purpose: fear of hell had seized on me, the cords of death had wound about me; I felt as if wholly forsaken, nor did I know which way to turn;—all my prayers committed to memory, would not avail. O! Eternity!—Eternity! I exclaimed,—which way shall I fly?

The passage-door of the house stood open wide; I saw the rain pouring down, the lightning blaze, and heard the thunders roar. I ran, or rather reeled, out of the house into the yard a few paces, to the garden fence, and sunk on my knees, determined to give myself wholly and without reserve to Jesus, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind; submitting to his will, and to his will alone.

“Having, in this manner, humbled myself before my Lord and Master, unable to utter a word, a vivid flash of lightning darted across my eyes; at the same instant, a clap of thunder. O! what a clap!—as it ceased, the whole anguish of soul was removed; I did not know what had happened unto me; my heart felt glad, my soul was happy, my mouth was filled with praises and thanksgiving to God, for what he had done for me, a poor, unworthy creature. I thought if ever a being in this world had cause to praise the Lord, I was that creature. For several nights, tears of gratitude and joy moistened my pillow, and I had many happy hours. For some time I continued in this state of mind; my soul was happy when I arose in the morning; all nature had, in my eyes, put on a different appearance,—all things

had become new, and I was enabled to rejoice all the day long." This change occurred in 1767, in the 18th year of his age. He adds:

"But by degrees I perceived an alteration in my mind; gradually I lost this pleasing sensation; fear returned again and took possession of my heart more and more; the confidence in God which I formerly was enabled to exercise, was lost; embarrassment and distress again occupied the place in my heart which they had for some time relinquished.

"In this situation I had a conversation with an elder or preacher of the Mennonite society, consulting him, and asking his advice. He counseled me to be baptized, to join the society, and take the sacrament. I took his friendly advice, and did as he had counseled me to do; but all this did not restore to me the joyful sensation or inward comfort which I had lost. True, I was not accused, nor did any person even insinuate any thing derogatory to my religion, but I knew and felt a deficiency of something within."

Subsequently he was married, and became engrossed in worldly affairs. Soon,



however, he was again thoroughly aroused from his slumbers, brought in penitence to the cross, by a severe judgment of God, and once more, and with greater clearness than ever before, the Spirit witnessed to his spirit that he was a child of God. Referring to this return of peace to his soul, he says:—"In a moment the peace of God and pardon of my sins was manifested to my soul, and the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit, that God, for Jesus' sake, had taken away the burthen of my sins, and shed abroad his love in my poor unworthy heart. O! thou glorious Being; how did my soul feel at the time? Only those who have felt and experienced the same grace, will be able to understand or comprehend what I am about to say. Yes, gentle reader, if, at the time, I could have called a thousand lives my own, I would have pledged them all, every one of them, to testify to the certainty of my acceptance with God. My joy, or rather ecstasy, was so great, that I was, in some measure, as one beside himself. Not to disturb those who were in the house, locked in sleep, I ran out into the yard to give utterance to my feelings. There I

gave glory and hallelujahs to my Redeemer with a loud voice. My whole heart was filled with gratitude to God and the Lamb. Unto him be all the praise and glory for ever. Amen. Say not, dear reader, this is enthusiasm. Before this time, (but once) I did not know, nor did I believe it possible, to experience the pardon of sin in this life; but now again I was convinced of the reality, although at the time I never had yet heard this, what some will call, Methodist doctrine preached.

"Several weeks, I am almost ready to say, perhaps the most happy weeks of my life, passed away in this happy manner; my peace flowing like a river, and the love of God dwelling in my heart. I now felt a desire, yea, a something within, urging me to communicate this happiness to my fellow-creatures. I thought and believed it to be my duty to inform every individual of the loving-kindness of God, and especially of what he had done for my soul; but fear that I would be considered insane or a fool, prevented my performing this duty. Ultimately I determined to go to one of our preachers, who stood high in my estimation, and hold a conversation with him

on the subject. I related to him, with all the fervor of a new convert, what the work of grace had accomplished in my soul. My heart was full of the love of God, and my expressions were, perhaps, rather fervent; therefore, he could not understand me. He thought me hasty; said that I had formed too stout an opinion in this matter, and might very easily be in error in believing such professed experience.

"When I had left him, and was again by myself, on my way home, the enemy of souls assaulted me with fearful doubts. Only see, whispered he to me, this man is a preacher, a pious character, and is ignorant of this work of grace in his soul, knows nothing of the certainty of his acceptance with God. Who art thou? how should you know more than this good man? would He bestow on you alone an experience of grace which, it appears, He withholds from other pious persons and religious characters? And yet I had imparted unto him not near all my exercises which I intended to communicate, because I soon discovered that he did not understand me. It was after dark in the evening; I had eight miles to walk. All the way I had to fight a severe combat



with the enemy, being afraid I might have expressed the work of grace in my soul with too much ardor and assurance."

In this unhappy condition he passed several years, experiencing, alternately, great joy, and again passing days and nights in distress and agony of soul. He remarks: "I do sincerely believe, if I had been obedient to the call of God, I should have been saved much distress of mind. But the office of a preacher appeared to me too important, too great, and myself less than nothing."

While in this conflict of mind, thinking, like Jönah, of fleeing to a place of rest, he removed to Washington county, Maryland, where, in the good providence of God, he met with Otterbein and Guething. "Frequently," he wrote in his journal, "I heard them preach in my own vicinity, their preaching making lasting impressions on the hearts of their hearers. They insisted on the necessity of a genuine repentance and conversion to God, in the knowledge and pardon of sins past. Their preaching appeared to be owned and blessed of God. Many were awakened from their sleep of sin and death, were brought

from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to God, found the pearl of great price, and adhered to, and followed the doctrine which they preached. These they formed into societies, and for the time being, were called by some, '*Otterbein's people*.' Whereas, these men preached the same doctrine which I had experienced, and which, according to my views and discernment, perfectly agreed with the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles; therefore, I associated myself with them, and joined their society, and was blessed."

His doubts, in relation to the validity of his call to the ministry, were now all removed, and he was kindly pressed to make the effort to speak to the people publicly. He did so, beginning by the relation of his own experience. He says, in his journal:—

"I stammered this out as well as I had ability, and could not restrain my tears, beseeching the people to embrace in Christ the offered mercy. This had a good effect; many tears were shed, and convictions ensued. In this discharge of my duty, which I believe I owed to God and my fellow-

men, a sense of the divine approbation rested on my mind."

"Thus, a door was effectually opened before him to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; and he was, indeed, a chosen vessel of the Lord, as his subsequent labors most amply prove. Though, in some respects, less than Otterbein, Guething, or Boehm, nevertheless, take him as he was, we are justified in saying of him, that the grace of God was not bestowed on him in vain, for he labored more abundantly, journeyed more, preached more frequently, and visited more extensively. He was just the man, by nature and by grace, for his place. Tall in stature, of a commanding figure, and a keen visage, a voice moderately strong, and if, at times, interrupted for a moment by a slight impediment in his speech, it but heightened the effect of his preaching, drawing the attention of the audience only nearer to the speaker, affording him an opportunity to draw the Gospel net more effectually around them, and thus secure a larger draught. From first to last, and for many years, Mr. Newcomer made good proof of his ministry, in all things showing himself a pattern of good works.



In doctrine he was pure, grave, and sincere. He was successful in winning souls to Christ, and unremitting in his labors, being often and suddenly called upon to attend meetings appointed without his knowledge, to reach some of which, he had to travel one hundred and more miles. To do this required, on his part, much self-denial and sacrifice of domestic interests, which brought him often into great straits and sore conflicts. But he said he had promised to be obedient to God, and the brethren, so none of these things moved him from his purpose of preaching Christ. His burning zeal would give him no rest, in season nor out of season; neither in summer nor winter. He was sometimes heard to say, 'Well, this is hard, but the salvation of one soul outweighs it all; let me go.' Often he was compelled to make forced rides, to expose his person in the most inclement season of the year, and in the stages of high water; but none of these things could check him in his course." Mr. Spayth says: "When I was traveling Susquehanna Circuit, in the year 1812, in the depth of winter, of cold and snow, I had a meeting in Berks county. While

preaching, Brother Newcomer's tall figure made its appearance at the door. I beckoned to him to come to the stand; but the room being crowded, he remained where he was, and, without leaving the door, closed the meeting with a very impressive exhortation, singing, and prayer. After the benediction, the audience began to disperse. Now was Newcomer's time; he shook hands with one, and then with another, addressing some by name; and exhorted all, both young and old, with a voice and visage as spiritual and holy as if he had just dropped down from the court of heaven. Many began to weep, and a gracious and powerful blessing was experienced. Thus, often, when it was thought that he was far away, he would drop in to meetings, unlooked for; but his advent was every-where and always hailed with joy, for God of a truth was with him."\*

Such was Christian Newcomer, one of Otterbein's earliest and most efficient helpers, *raised up and put into the ministry on God's plan*. But, in the estimation of the High-churchmen of his day, he was an "*irregular*" minister, and his admission to

\* Spayth, pp. 67, 68, 69.

the sacred office one of Mr. Otterbein's gravest offenses. But Mr. O. listened to the voice of God, and obediently followed it, and thus another important step in the reformation was taken.



## CHAPTER VIII.

CO-LABORERS—HENDEL AND OTHERS, AND THE  
METHODISTS.

In November, 1765, Mr. Otterbein closed his labors at Frederick, and took charge of the Reformed congregation in York, Pa., from which he had received a regular call. At York he remained about nine years, inclusive of a year and a half, in 1770-71, spent on a visit to the land of his nativity. This was the last Reformed congregation of which he was ever pastor.

As we have seen, each year added to his influence and responsibilities, outside of the particular church of which he had the pastoral care; and, also, to the obstacles thrown in his way by the Reformed cœtus or synod of Pennsylvania, with which he was officially connected. In a succeeding chapter we shall see that, on his removal from York to Baltimore, in 1774, he virtually

dissolved his connection with the Reformed coetus, established a church independent of the coetus, and publicly and officially committed himself, and his congregation in Baltimore, to the people who, soon after, were regularly organized under the name, "United Brethren in Christ." Toward this consummation, things had been inevitably tending from the period of his conversion, but more directly and rapidly since the union formed with Boehm, at Isaac Long's.

That we may thoroughly understand Mr. Otterbein's history, and the circumstances under which he became entirely separated from the Reformed church, it is necessary that we recur again to some facts already adduced, inquire particularly into the character of the Reformed coetus of Pennsylvania, and notice the rise of the Methodists in this country, and his relations with them.

As to the masses of the members of the Reformed church, it is evident that they were unregenerate persons, knowing nothing of the new birth or a change of heart. Even Dr. Nevin admits that Mr. Otterbein was driven into the measures he adopted,

"by the cold and dead temper which he found generally prevalent in the church.\* The same was true of a majority of the members of the *cœtus*. They had not experienced the life of God in the soul, and hence could not sympathize with Mr. Otterbein, nor appreciate his labors; indeed, they were impelled, by the state of their hearts, to oppose, and, in many instances, to persecute him.

But this is only a partial view of the case. A small minority of the members, in many of the congregations, were truly spiritual people. This was the case at Lancaster, Frederick, York, Tulpehocken, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. Some of these had been converted in Europe; others under the labors of the spiritual men who went out under the direction of the "Church of God in the Spirit;" and others still, were the fruit of the labors of Mr. Otterbein, and those ministers who sympathized with him.

A minority of the *cœtus* were also truly converted men. Prominent among these was the distinguished DR. HENDEL, sen., whose sister Mr. Otterbein married. He was a native of the Palatinate; reached this coun-

\* 28 Lect. op Heid. Cat.



try in 1764, and labored in Lancaster, Tulpehocken, and at Philadelphia, where he died of yellow fever in 1798. He was a man of profound learning and unaffected piety. With Mr. Otterbein he labored indefatigably to promote spirituality in the church. He was peculiarly gifted and powerful in prayer, and a great lover of prayer-meetings. John Christian Stahl Schmidt says of him: "This man is one of the best preachers that I became acquainted with in America. He possesses much science and knowledge; and, without any sectarian or party spirit, he is, in heart, consecrated to the cause of true godliness."\* Hendel and Otterbein were men of one spirit, and labored together in unity and love.

Next among the list of Mr. Otterbein's co-laborers and friends in the coetus we must place DANIEL WAGNER. Mr. Wagner was born near Dillenburg, the home of the Otterbein family; and, when he was only two years old, his parents emigrated to this country. He was raised upon a farm, studied theology under Dr. Hendel,†

\* Pilger-Reise zu Wasser und zu Land, p. 291. Quoted by Harbaugh, p. 127.

† Bishop Asbury denominates Mr. Wagner a pupil of Mr. Otter-

and entered the ministry in 1771. His pupil, Dr. Mayer, bears the following testimony to his character as a Christian and minister of Christ, all of which is corroborated by other witnesses:—"He was a holy man. Whoever had intercourse with him had abundant reason to know that in him 'the old man' was conquered. \* \* Especially did he love the souls of men, and travailed for their salvation. \* \* As a Christian, he was a true follower of his Lord and Savior. He did not consume himself in idle questions and disputations, or in sectarian zeal for words or opinions; for he felt that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. His piety was . . . lively, earnest, and full of feeling—the religion of the living, not of the dead. \* \* As a preacher, he had many excellencies. He received the word from God's mouth, and proclaimed it in his fear. Hence, his sermons were full of wisdom and power."\* Such was Daniel Wagner, the steadfast friend and co-laborer of William Otterbein. He died in York in 1810.

bein. This seems to be an error. It is possible, however, that he did spend some time with Mr. O. during the period of his preparation for the ministry.

\* Funeral sermon by Dr. Mayer.

JOHN CHRISTIAN STAHLSCMIDT, also, deserves a place among the friends and co-laborers of Otterbein in the cœtus. While in his minority, residing with his father in Germany, about the year 1758, he was brought to an experimental knowledge of Christ Jesus. His uncle was a Pietist, and through his exhortations, and by the perusal of Jacob Boehm's "Way to Christ," he was strengthened and confirmed in a holy life. His father, being a Christian of the popular German type, was incensed at his new experience, and mode of life, and especially at his sympathy for the hated Pietists; and, although his son had now reached his nineteenth year, he whipped him with a rod until he extorted from him a promise that he would separate himself from the Pietists while he remained at home. Not being at rest under the tyranny of his churchly father, he fled to Amsterdam, Holland, where he became a sailor on a vessel in the East India trade. After many years, he returned home, was kindly received by his father, and engaged in business with his pious uncle. During all this time his love to Christ suffered no abatement. "Oh!" he would exclaim, "is there



here already so much peace, rest, and blessedness, in Jesus and his communion? What will once be ours in eternity?" Speaking of a wood near his place of business with his uncle, he wrote:—"Oh! how many blessed hours did I spend here, in sweet communion with my divine Savior! His love animated my whole heart. I often lived more in eternity than in time." In the year 1770, he came to America, and, at the residence of Rev. Mr. Stoy, he formed the acquaintance of Otterbein. In compliance with an invitation from Otterbein, he visited York, and remained with him six weeks, during which time he occasionally preached. By the recommendation of Mr. O., he went to Tulpehocken, to assist Mr. Hendel in his large field. With such spirits as Otterbein and Hendel he felt quite at home. After spending nine years in America, he returned to Europe. He was deeply interested in the reformation of religion which was in progress in this country, and, after his return to Europe, kept up a correspondence with Otterbein and Wagner. He died in peace in 1825. He was a steadfast and enlightened friend of Jesus.

These ministers, and some others of like spirit,\* were the unswerving friends of Mr. Otterbein; and, although they were unable to control the cœtus, they exerted a good influence for the truth and for piety. But they were a cause of no little inconvenience and discomfort to those members of the cœtus who were hostile to evangelical religion. Otterbein and Guething, especially, were a source of constant agitation and grievance to the anti-evangelical party. Great efforts were made, from time to time, to purge out the evangelical element, and numerous and painful difficulties resulted therefrom. In some churches, the evangelical party were in the ascendancy; in others the anti-evangelical party had entire control; and in a few cases they were

\* Rev. ANTHONY HAUZ, also, deserves honorable mention among the later friends of Mr. Otterbein, and of the United Brethren. He was a native of Germany, but came to Pennsylvania in boyhood. He studied theology under Dr. Hendel, and was licensed to preach in 1787. He preached in Harrisburg, Carlisle, and elsewhere in Pennsylvania, until 1804, when he removed to the State of New York, where he remained until his death at an advanced age. Dr. Helfenstein describes him as "tall, slim, meager, dark complexioned, with a large acquiline nose." Guething, Newcomer, and other Brethren preachers, were often invited to his church, and found in his society. In 1798, he attended a meeting in a Mennonist church, with Guething and Newcomer. Shortly after, these evangelists visited him at Carlisle, lodged with him, and preached at his church.

about equally divided. One case may be selected, out of many which are accessible, as an illustration of these remarks. Dr. Helfenstein relates the following facts concerning one of the oldest Reformed congregations,—the congregation which had, for many years, enjoyed the ministrations of Henry Antes:—"In the year 1790, my father, minister in Germantown, departed this life. An invitation was sent to Rev. Anthony Hautz, to visit that church. He did so. They gave him a call: he accepted it, returned home, and, shortly afterwards, gave them notice that he declined it. The reason he gave was, that, if the Rev. Helfenstein had his difficulties in the congregation, how could *he* be able to manage them? *The difficulties were the prayer-meetings that were at that time introduced into the congregation.* There was then a great revival in the church; numbers were awakened, and met together in prayer-meetings: to this there was great opposition, and caused much commotion in the congregation."

During the period of Mr. Otterbein's labors at York, other evangelical co-laborers made their appearance in this country; and,



as Mr. O., true to the spirit of Jesus, received them as brethren, and became associated with them in the work of reformation, the breach between himself and the adverse party of the cœtus was greatly widened thereby. These new co-laborers were called METHODISTS.

In the year 1765, some Irish families, who had been members of Mr. Wesley's societies in Great Britain, settled in New York. Among them was Mr. Philip Embury, who had been authorized to preach, as a local minister, before his removal to this country. These emigrants, as is too often the case with Christians who remove to a new country, neglected the means of grace, became careless in regard to their soul's best interest, and were on the point of making shipwreck of faith entirely. Mr. Embury, the local preacher, had so far apostatized and forgotten the solemn responsibilities of a Christian minister, that he joined with some of his brethren in card-playing for a pastime.

Happily for these wandering sheep, a family of Hecks came over the following year. Philip and Barbara Heck were warm-hearted Christians, not easily moved away from the

faith and hope of the Gospel. This was especially true of Barbara. Finding out, soon after her arrival, the sad state of things in the little colony of Methodists, her spirit was stirred within her; and when she ascertained where Mr. Embury and his brethren met to play instead of to pray, she made it her business to go in suddenly upon them, and, seizing the cards, she indignantly threw them into the fire; then, turning to Mr. E., she said: "You must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hands!"

This resolute conduct and stern rebuke of a woman of strong faith and deep piety, aroused Mr. Embury at once to a sense of his danger and duty; and, shortly afterward, he preached, in his own house, to a congregation of five persons, the first Methodist sermon delivered in America. A society was organized in 1766; and, in 1768, a good house of worship was erected. While the house of worship was going up, a letter was sent to Mr. Wesley, entreating him, in the most earnest manner, to send them a preacher. In this letter they say to Mr. W. and the conference, that, in

case the means for the payment of the preacher's passage to America can not be raised in England, "*we will sell our coats and shirts to procure it.*"

Mr. Wesley was not slow in answering this earnest cry for help from the New World. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pillmore, volunteering their services, were first sent over. After these, came Robert Williams and John King, and others; and, in the year 1771, Mr. Asbury was authorized, by Mr. Wesley, to come over and superintend the whole work. Thus was Methodism, which has exerted a wide and powerful influence upon the religious history of America, established.

The Methodist preachers of this period were remarkably plain, humble, and zealous men. They were severe in their condemnation of pride in dress and vain display. Notes like the following are interspersed through Mr. Asbury's journal: "Here (at Richard Owing's) we had Dr. Warfuld, and several polite people, to dine with us. I spoke to the ladies about head-dresses; but the Doctor vindicated them, observing that religion did not consist in dress. I quoted the words of St. Peter." They were, gener-



ally, what are called uneducated men, and unsparing in their denunciations, not of colleges and of education, but of a "college-bred ministry." This brought upon them the charge of ignorance, and of opposition to learning. Passages like the following are found in the journal before quoted: "Before preaching in Kent county, one Mr. R., a church minister, came to me and desired to know who I was. He spoke great swelling words, charged me with making schism, and told me that I hindered the people from their work. I asked him if fairs and horse-races did not hinder them? He said, 'What did you come for?' I replied, 'To turn sinners to God.' He said, 'I can do that as well as you.' I told him I had authority from God. He then laughed at me, and said, 'You are a fine fellow, indeed!' I began to preach and urge the people to repent. After preaching, the parson went out, and told the people they did wrong in coming to hear me; and said I spoke against learning; whereas, I only spoke to this purpose, that, when a man turned from all sin, he would adorn every character in church and state."

With these men, Otterbein, Boehm, Schwope, Guething, Newcomer, and other

United Brethren ministers, formed an early and most cordial Christian fellowship. Mr. Asbury became acquainted with Mr. Schwope, and, through him, with Mr. Otterbein, in 1771, the year of his arrival in this country; and he, ever afterward, cultivated their acquaintance, and embraced every favorable opportunity of enjoying their society. His love and veneration for Mr. Otterbein were great. At one time, he tells us, in his journal, he had, with Mr. O., "a blessed and refreshing time," and "spent the afternoon with him." This was in 1775. A year later, he says, "Returned, on Wednesday, to Baltimore, and spent some time with Mr. Otterbein. There are very few with whom I can find so much unity and freedom in conversation as with him." In 1784, he says: "Sunday, 20th, I attempted to preach at Newtown. I raged and threatened the people, and was afraid it was spleen. I found, however, that Mr. Otterbein had done the same a little time before." In 1813, not to lengthen these notices, he says—"A heavy ride brought us to Baltimore. I gave an evening to the great Otterbein. I found him placid and happy in God."\*

\* This was at the time when, according to Mr. Harbaugh, Otter-

In nearly all the communities where the German language was spoken, in the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the United Brethren preachers, as we have already seen, preceded the Methodists, and were in advance of them several years; and when the latter, under the energetic superintendence of Francis Asbury, pushed their way into the German settlements and towns, the Brethren were the first to receive them into their houses, to welcome them as ambassadors of Christ, and to afford them opportunity and facilities for preaching the Gospel, and extending among them the kingdom of Christ. This they did gladly, because the Methodists preached, with power and much assurance, a living Gospel,—a living and heart-felt religion; the very Gospel—the same religion—which they had experienced, and for which they had suffered no little persecution.

Many of the Brethren, it is true, understood the English language but imperfectly; yet they could see with their eyes, and feel in their hearts, that God was with the

being was "silently mourning" over the great mistakes he had committed in "the heat of former enthusiasm" in the revival movement! Mr. Asbury did not find him in a penitential mood, however, but "placid and happy in God!"



Methodist evangelists; and when they witnessed the conversion of souls under their ministry, their joy knew no bounds, and they regarded them as brethren in the Lord.

It is not surprising, then, that they should extend a hearty greeting to a body of English ministers, admirably adapted to the wants of the English-speaking people, who were holy, humble men, baptized with the same Spirit, and drinking at the same fountain with themselves, and who were raising up societies of zealous and devoted Christians. A mutual confidence and friendship ensued, which was of great advantage to the cause of religion, and the extension of the reign of grace. For a long period, Methodists and Brethren flowed sweetly together, and, in their public assemblies and great meetings, knew no difference. They preached and prayed, sang and shouted, together, and witnessed the most extraordinary outpourings of the Spirit of God upon many people, as the result of their united labors.\*

Mr. Spayth, who participated in the scenes which he describes, says: "I confess it is hard for me to get away from

\* Spayth, pp. 80, 81.

this sunny spot. The same love, I trust, still burns within my breast; and I can look back, and yet see, as if it were yesterday, the smile, the cordial shake of the hand, (hands now cold in death while mine tremblingly traces these lines) the hearty and joyous welcome, when Methodists and United Brethren met. Their voices, mingled in songs of praise, their hallelujahs often repeated, continue to ring in my ears; and, while I write, they thrill my soul afresh. Whenever my mind reverts to those scenes, an angel seems to whisper, it was then

That the morning stars sang together,  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Then there was no iniquity in Jacob,  
Nor perverseness in Israel:  
The Lord his God was with him,  
And the shout of a king was among them.\*

In all fundamental matters, the Methodists and the United Brethren in Christ

\* "One of the elders who assisted at the consecration of Mr. Asbury was the Rev. Mr. Otterbein. Having enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with this pious and evangelical minister of Jesus Christ, and having full fellowship with him as a laborious servant of God, Mr. Asbury requested that he might be associated with Dr. Coke and the other elders, in the performance of this solemn ceremony." Dr. Bang's History M. E. Church, Vol. 1, p. 158. Mr. A. was ordained by Dr. Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and William Otterbein, Dec. 27th, 1784.

agreed perfectly. There were some things, however, which prevented the two societies, at the early period under consideration, from flowing into one. The Methodists were still under the dominion of the Episcopal church, and received from the ministers of that church the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Mr. Asbury appears to have been, for a number of years, a very strenuous Episcopalian, and sharply rebuked some of his co-laborers, who, unwilling to receive the sacraments at the hands of unrenewed clergymen, many of whom were the most bitter opposers of the revival, administered them themselves, or received them from ministers not in the fancied line of apostolical succession. One can scarcely repress a smile when he reads, in Mr. Asbury's journal, notes like the following: "Friday 24. Was much refreshed by letters from Maryland; but one of these letters informed me that Mr. S——e (Strawbridge, we suppose) was very officious in administering the ordinances. What strange infatuation attends that man!" With these Episcopal notions, the United Brethren could have no sympathy. During the first inter-



view which Mr. Schwope had with Mr. Asbury, in 1771, this subject was discussed, Mr. Schwope vainly endeavoring to convince Mr. Asbury that Mr. Wesley did not do well in preventing Methodist preachers from administering the sacraments.

Close-door class-meetings were also objectionable to the United Brethren; and it appears that Mr. Wesley's rules respecting them were rigidly adhered to by the first Methodist preachers. They found it necessary, however, very frequently, to re-enforce themselves, in this unreasonable exclusiveness, by conference resolutions; because the love of Christ, which they possessed, protested constantly and loudly against it.

At a later period, however, Mr. Wesley made provision for the ordination of Methodist preachers, so that the first difficulty was removed; and, between 1809 and 1815, an arrangement was entered into, by which the second was partially obviated. This subject will come under our notice again, in a subsequent part of this history.

## CHAPTER IX.

## MR. OTTERBEIN AT BALTIMORE.

In the year 1774, we find Mr. Otterbein in the city of Baltimore, organizing a church which, in doctrine and discipline, was distinct from, and independent of, the German Reformed church.

He had now reached the forty-eighth year of his age, and the 25th of his ministry. Nearly twenty years had passed since he had entered fully into the light and liberty of the sons of God; and, during all that period, he had labored incessantly, in public and in private, at Lancaster, Tulpehocken, Frederick, Antietam, York, and at numerous other places, to promote, in the German Reformed church, and in other churches and sects, a revival of Bible religion.

And those labors had not been without fruits. The order and the morality of many congregations had been improved;

hundreds, and even thousands, had been truly converted to God; and a "new life had been brought into the church, at first as a grain of mustard seed, but later as a tree whose branches afford a grateful resting-place to many."\*

Meetings for prayer and for religious conference had been established, and were kept up in numerous places in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. These were attended by converted Mennonists, Lutherans, and German Reformed alike, and were conducted by laymen, unless a preacher might happen to be present. And, in thousands of families, the holy incense of praise and prayer, morning and evening, ascended to God.

The great meetings, so happily inaugurated at Isaac Long's, had been attended, from year to year, by the richest blessings. They had become an institution of no small value. Thither went up the people of God from all quarters and churches, as the tribes of Israel flowed together at the feast of Tabernacles.

The great truth, that a vital union with Christ is essential to religious life, had ob-

\* Dr. Zacharias' Centenary Sermon, p. 15.



tained a firm hold in a large portion of the public mind. In many places it had become apparent to all that holiness of heart and life were essential qualifications for the sacred office, and for membership in the church of Christ. And many ministers, who bitterly opposed the revival, were, nevertheless, obliged, by the increasing light, to pay a stricter regard to decency, morality, and the outward forms of godliness, at least.

And last, but not least, the voice of God had been heard and obeyed, in the recognition of a ministry raised up among the converted people—a ministry composed of men of limited education, it may be, but of earnest piety, clear experience, and excellent sense—a ministry from the laboring people, and adapted to them.

These steps had been taken only in obedience to the clearest expressions of the will of Providence. Nothing had been hastily done. Nothing was further from Mr. Otterbein than a desire to wound the feelings of his brethren, or to occasion division or strife. And yet, such were the necessary results in many places. From the period of his conversion to the year 1774, and onward, opposition to the revival, and to its agents, was

bitter and unintermitting. All the usual appliances which an ingenious and unscrupulous adversary has been able to invent were tried.

But none of these things had moved Mr. Otterbein. During all those years of conflict he had advanced steadily in the knowledge and love of God. All who mention him, whether friends or foes, speak with emphasis of the high state of spirituality he had attained—of his holy walk, heavenly conversation, and evangelical preaching. He had become fully enlisted in the revival movement, and firmly united with all who could give a reason of the hope that was in them. Ecclesiastically, he was connected with the German Reformed church, but, vitally, he was bound, by the strong cords of a common experience, and a sacred fellowship in Christ, to the "Brethren," who had, like streams rising in diverse directions, flowed into one channel at Isaac Long's.

Meantime a number of persons who had been converted under Mr. Otterbein's ministry at Lancaster, Frederick, York, and elsewhere, had removed to Baltimore, then a thriving young city. The Reformed church of Baltimore was under the pastoral

care of J. C. Faber, whose ministrations were formal and unedifying, and whose life was offensive. The state of the congregation, viewed from an evangelical stand-point, was deplorable indeed. Discipline was neglected, and pastor and people were alike involved in sin. But there were in this church, as in many others, two parties; and, about the year 1770, the evangelical party sought to procure another pastor, for they could hardly hope for a reformation of the congregation without the aid of an enlightened spiritual guide.

Previous to this time, a young minister named BENEDICT SCHWOPE, from Germany, had commenced preaching in the neighborhood of Baltimore. He is mentioned by Mr. Asbury, in his journal, in a number of places, as a very pious, talented, and zealous German minister, in full sympathy with the revival movement, and with Mr. Otterbein. Mr. Asbury formed his acquaintance during the first year of his ministry in America, and always alludes to him, in his journal, in terms of warm affection and respect.\*

This young man was the choice of the

\* Asbury's Journal, Vol. 1, pp. 52, 96, 109, 149.



evangelical party, in the German Reformed congregation at Baltimore. But, being in the minority, which was unhappily the case with that party in too many congregations, they could not effect a change. "Like priest, like people." The majority of the old congregation adhered pertinaciously to Faber, and to his like, for many years. They had no notion of an evangelical minister.

Unable longer to live under the pastoral care of a man like Faber, the evangelical portion of the congregation withdrew, and established religious worship at another place in the city. Four years of ineffectual effort at a reconciliation and a re-union of the congregation ensued. In 1771, Faber resigned; but George Wallauer, a man of less character, was immediately chosen in his place. Meantime the seceding party were served by Mr. Schwope. At an early period efforts were made, by Mr. Schwope, and those with whom he labored, to induce Mr. Otterbein to remove to Baltimore. Mr. Francis Asbury, who had made that city his head quarters, and who had become warmly attached to Mr. Otterbein, wrote him urg-

ently on the subject.\* At length, in *direct violation of a resolution of the Reformed cætus*, but in obedience to the voice of Providence, Mr. Otterbein resigned his charge in York, and removed to Baltimore.

The history of the struggle between the two parties in the old Reformed church at Baltimore; of the withdrawal of the evangelical party, and their often-defeated efforts at an amicable adjustment of the existing difficulties; of their resolution, as a last resort, to organize a new and independent church on Gospel grounds alone; and a statement of the doctrine and discipline of that new church, were briefly and plainly set down by Mr. Otterbein himself, in the Church Book of the new society. As that is a document of permanent interest, it must be inserted entire.

\* See Asbury's Journal, p. 99

THE CHURCH BOOK OF THE EVANGELICAL REFORMED  
CHURCH.\*

HOWARD'S HILL, BALTIMORE.

*In the Name of the Triune God: Amen.*

In the year 1771, there stood in the Reformed church in Baltimore, a preacher by the name of Faber; but, forasmuch as said Faber was not in fellowship with the Reformed preachers in Pennsylvania, i. e. he was not a member of the Coetu Pennsylvanu, and likewise led an offensive life, a division took place in this church. In the month of October of said year, the said Reformed preachers met in Reading, Pa., where deputies from both parties of this divided church attended. Here it was resolved to dismiss said Faber, which was done.† Both parties agreed now, unitedly, to call a preacher from the coetus, and to offer this call to Mr. Bluhmer: this was

\* Translated from the original German MS., by H. G. Spayth.

† Rev. Mr. Schwöpe was charged as being the occasion of the strife in Mr. Faber's congregation, as was also Mr. Otterbein; and, complaints coming up before the coetus, Revs. Gross and Gobrecht were appointed a committee to investigate the case, and adjust the difficulties. This committee reported favorably of Mr. Schwöpe, and against Mr. Faber. History of the Fathers of the German Reformed Church, Vol. II., p. 390.



done, but the call was not accepted by him. The cœtus now resolved to send to the Baltimore church, a preacher from among the four who, at that time, according to letters from Holland, were on their way, and now daily expected. In the meantime, there came to Pennsylvania W. Wallauer, whom the synod of Holland had not sent. The opposite party, without saying a word to the other party, contrary to the agreement and the resolve of the cœtus, brought him away, and received him as their preacher. But at the next cœtus, which was held in the year 1772, deputies from both parties attended; and the cœtus protested against Wallauer, and the conduct of his party, and declared that they could take no further notice of them. Scarcely any hope being now left of a reunion, the remaining members of this church found themselves under the necessity of looking about for another preacher, and of forming a church for themselves. A call was made to William Otterbein, who then stood in the Reformed church in York; but he refused because of the disorganized condition of the congregation; but, after repeated solicitations, he expressed a willing-

ness to accept, provided the cœtus should give consent. At the next cœtus, deputies from both parties appeared again, and, before a final action was taken in the matter with Otterbein, a union took place, and William Hendel was proposed as preacher, to which the deputies of both parties consented. But, a few days after the return home of the deputies, the opposite party rejected the proposition, and all to which their deputies had pledged themselves. The division was now greater than at any former period. The prospect of a re-union entirely vanished, and the members of this church, who had before addressed William Otterbein, saw the absolute necessity of forming a church for themselves; and they gave Otterbein a new call, which he finally accepted; and subsequently, in the year 1775, it was, by the cœtus held in Lebanon, confirmed.

Article 14. After due consideration, the cœtus deems it proper (good) that Domine Otterbein continue in his pastoral office. From report, it appears that his labors are blest, and the opposing party cease the strife.

CONRAD BUCHER, Sec. pro tem.

## CHURCH BOOK.

William Otterbein came to Baltimore, May 4th, 1774, and commenced his ministerial work. Without delay, and by the help of God, he began to organize a church, and, as far as it was possible for him, to bring it within the letter and the spirit of the Gospel. Such disciplinary church rules as were needful, were, therefore, from time to time, adopted, made known, and the importance of keeping them earnestly enjoined.

But the afflicting and long-continued war, and the dispersion, on account of the same, of many of its members into the interior of the country, prevented those rules from being written in a book for their preservation.

But through and by the goodness of God, peace and quietness being restored, and the gathering together of former members, with a considerable addition of new members, the Church finds herself, at this time, considerably increased. Therefore, it is unanimously concluded and ordained, by the whole church, to bring the CONSTITUTION and ordinances of this church into the following form, which we hold as



agreeing with the word of God; and for their permanency and perpetual observance, herewith record and preserve.

By the undersigned preacher and members which now constitute this church, it is hereby ordained and resolved, that this church, which has been brought together in Baltimore, by the ministration of our present preacher, W. Otterbein, in future, consist in a preacher, three elders, and three deacons, an almoner and church members, and these together shall pass under and by the name—The Evangelic Reformed church.

2d. No one, whoever he may be, can be preacher or member of this church, whose walk is unchristian and offensive, or who lives in some open sin.—(1 Tim. iii.: 1-3. 1 Cor. v.: 11-13.)

3d. Each church member must attend faithfully the public worship on the Sabbath day, and at all other times.

4th. This Church shall yearly solemnly keep two days of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, which shall be designated by the preacher; one in the spring, the other in the autumn of the year.

5th. The members of this church, im-

pressed with the necessity of a constant religious exercise, suffering the word of God richly and daily to dwell among them,—(Col. iii.: 16. Heb. iii.: 13:—x: 24, 25)—resolve that each sex shall hold meetings apart, once a week, for which the most suitable day, hour, and place, shall be chosen, for the males as well as the females: for the first, an hour in the evening, and for the last, an hour in the day time, are considered the most suitable. In the absence of the preacher, an elder or deacon shall lead such meetings.

(a.) The rules for these special meetings are these: No one can be received into them who is not resolved to flee the wrath to come, and, by faith and repentance, to seek his salvation in Christ, and who is not resolved willingly to obey the disciplinary rules, which are now observed by this church, for good order, and advance in godliness, as well as such as in future may be added by the preacher and church Vestry; yet, always excepted, that such rules are founded on the word of God, which is the only unerring guide of faith and practice.

(b.) These meetings are to commence

and end with singing and prayer; and nothing shall be done but what will tend to build up and advance godliness.

(c.) Those who attend these special meetings but indifferently, sickness and absence from home excepted, after being twice or thrice admonished, without manifest amendment, shall exclude themselves from the church, (*versammlung*.)

(d.) Every member of this church [who is the head of a family] should fervently engage in private worship; morning and evening pray with his family; and himself and his household attend divine worship at all times.

(e.) Every member shall sedulously abstain from all backbiting and evil-speaking, of any person, or persons, without exception, and especially of his brethren in the church.—(Rom. xv.: 1-3. 2 Cor. xii.: 20. 1 Peter ii.: 1. Ja. iv.: 11.) The transgressor shall, in the first instance, be admonished privately; but, the second time, he shall be openly rebuked in the class-meeting.

(f.) Every one must avoid all worldly and sinful company, and, to the utmost, shun all foolish talking and jesting.—(Ps.



xv.: 4. Eph. v.: 4-11.) This offense will meet with severe church censure.

(g.) No one shall be permitted to buy or sell on the Sabbath, nor attend to worldly business; not to travel far or near, but each spend the day in quietness and religious exercises.—(Isa. lviii.: 13, 14.)

(h.) Each member shall willingly attend to any of the private concerns of the church, when required so to do, by the preacher or Vestry; and each one shall strive to lead a quiet and godly life, lest he give offense, and fall into the condemnation of the adversary.—(Math. v.: 14-16. 1 Pet. ii.: 12.)

6th. Persons expressing a desire to commune with us at the Lord's table, although they have not been members of our church, shall be admitted by consent of the Vestry, provided that nothing justly can be alleged against their walk in life; and more especially when it is known that they are seeking their salvation. After the preparation sermon, such persons may declare themselves openly before the assembly; also, that they are ready to submit to all wholesome discipline; and thus they are received into the church.

7th. Forasmuch as the difference of people and denominations end in Christ,—Rom. x.: 12. Col. iii.: 11)—and availeth nothing in Him but a new creature—(Gal. vi.: 13-16)—it becomes our duty, according to the Gospel, to commune with, and admit to the Lord's table, professors, to whatever order, or sort, of the Christian church they belong.

8th. All persons who may not attend our class-meetings, nor partake of the holy sacrament with us, but attend our public worship, shall be visited, by the preacher, in health and in sickness, and on all suitable occasions. He shall admonish them, baptize their children, attend to their funerals, impart instruction to their youths; and, should they have any children, the Church shall interest herself for their religious education.

9th. The preacher shall make it one of his highest duties to watch over the rising youth, diligently instructing them in the principles of religion, according to the word of God. He should catechise them once a week; and the more mature in years, who have obtained a knowledge of the great truths of the Gospel, should be impressed with the importance of striving, through divine grace, to become worthy recipients of

the holy sacrament. And in view of church membership, such as manifest a desire to this end, should be thoroughly instructed for a time, be examined in the presence of their parents and the Vestry, and, if approved, after the preparation sermon, they should be presented before the church, and admitted.

10th. The church is to establish and maintain a German school, as soon as possible; the Vestry to spare no effort to procure the most competent teachers, and devise such means and rules as will promote the best interests of the school.

11th. That, after the demise or removal of the preacher, the male members of the church shall meet, without delay, in the church edifice, and, after singing and prayer, one or more shall be proposed by the elders and deacons. A majority of votes shall determine the choice, and a call shall be made accordingly; but, should the preacher on whom the choice falls, decline the call, then, as soon as possible, others shall be proposed, and a choice made. But here it is especially reserved, that, should it so happen that before the demise or removal of the preacher, his place should already have been provided for, by a major-



ity of votes, then no new choice shall take place.

12th. No preacher shall stay among us who is not in unison with our adopted rules, and order of things, and class-meetings, and who does not diligently observe them.

13th. No preacher can stay among us who teacheth the doctrine of predestination, (*Gnadenwahl*) or the impossibility of falling from grace, and who holdeth them as doctrinal points.

14th. No preacher can stay among us who will not, to the best of his ability, CARE for the various churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, which churches, under the superintendence of William Otterbein, stand in fraternal unity with us.

15th. No preacher can stay among us who shall refuse to sustain, with all diligence, such members as have arisen from this or some other churches, or who may yet arise, as helpers in the work of the Lord, as preachers and exhorters, and to afford unto them all possible encouragement, so long as their lives shall be according to the Gospel.

16th. All the preceding items (*punctte*) shall be presented to the preacher chosen, and his full consent thereto obtained, before he enters on his ministry.

17th. The preacher shall nominate the elders from among the members who attend the special meetings, and no others shall be proposed; and their duties shall be made known unto them, by him, before the church.

18th. The elders, so long as they live in accordance with the Gospel, and shall not attempt to introduce any new act contrary to this constitution and these ordinances, are not to be dismissed from their office, except on account of debility, or other cause: should any one desire it, then, in that case, or by reason of death, the place shall be supplied by the preacher, as already provided.

19th. The three deacons are to be chosen yearly, on New Year's day, as follows:

The Vestry will propose six from among the members who partake with us of the holy sacrament. Each voter shall write the names of the three he desires for deacon, on a piece of paper, and, when the church has met, these papers shall be collected,

opened, and read, and such as have a majority of votes shall be announced to the church, and their duties made known unto them, by the preacher, in presence of the church.

20th. The almoner shall be chosen at the same time, and in the same manner, as the deacons, who, at the next election, will present his account.

21st. The preacher, elders, and deacons, shall attend to all the affairs of the church, compose the Church Vestry, and shall be so considered.

22d. All deeds, leases, and other rights concerning the property of this church, shall be conveyed, in best and safest manner, to this church Vestry, and their successors, as trustees of this church.

23d. Should a preacher, elder, or deacon, be accused of any known immorality, and, upon the testimony of two or three creditable witnesses, the same should be proven against him, he shall be immediately suspended; and, until he gives sure proof of true repentance, and makes open confession, he shall remain excluded from this church. The same rule shall be observed and carried out in relation to mem-



bers of the church, who shall be found guilty of immoral conduct.—(1 Cor. v.: 11-13. 1 Tim. v.: 20. Tit. iii.: 10.)

24th. All offenses between members shall be dealt with in strict conformity with the precepts of our Lord.—(Math. xviii.: 15-18.) No one is, therefore, permitted to name the offender, or the offense, except in the order prescribed by our Savior.

25th. No member is allowed to cite his brother before the civil authority, for any cause. All differences shall be laid before the Vestry, or each party may choose a referee from among the members of the church, to whom the adjustment of the matter shall be submitted. The decision of either the Vestry or referees shall be binding on each party; nevertheless, should any one believe himself wronged, he may ask a second hearing, which shall not be refused. This second hearing may be either before the same men, or some others of the church; but whosoever shall refuse to abide by this second verdict, or, on any occasion, speak of the matter of dispute, or accuse his opponent with the same, excludes himself from the church.

26th. The elders and deacons shall meet four times in the year, viz.: the last Sab-

bath in March, the last Sabbath in June, the last Sabbath in September, and the last Sabbath in December, in the parsonage house, after the afternoon service, to take the affairs of the church into consideration.

27th. This constitution and these ordinances shall be read every New Year's day, before the congregation, in order to keep them in special remembrance, and that they may be carefully observed, and no one plead ignorance of the same.

28th. We, the subscribers, acknowledge the above-written items and particulars, as the ground-work of our church, and we ourselves, as co-members, by our signatures, recognize and solemnly promise religious obedience to the same.

WILLIAM OTTERBEIN, *Preacher.*

LEHARD HERBACH,  
HENRY WEITNE,  
PETER HOFMAN, } *Elders.*

PHILIP BIER,  
WILLIAM BAKER,  
ABRAHAM LORSH, } *Deacons.*

BALTIMORE, January 1st, 1785.

This record proves, beyond all question, that the church on Howard's Hill, Baltimore, organized, under the auspices of

William Otterbein, as the Evangelical Reformed Church, (*gemeinde*) was, and is, different and distinct from, and independent of, the German Reformed church. Let a few prominent facts lying on the face of this record be considered:

1. The church on Howard's Hill was "brought together by the ministrations of William Otterbein." Before Mr. O. went to Baltimore, a division existed in the old church, between the unconverted and the converted members; and, although the latter, unable to live under the ministry of either Faber or Wallauer, had withdrawn, and had been served in the meantime by Benedict Schwope, yet they had never been organized into a church. It was in May, 1774, that Mr. Otterbein, "without delay, and by the help of God, began to organize a church" in Baltimore.

2. The name given to this church was not *German* Reformed, but *Evangelical* Reformed. It is well known that *German* Reformed was the proper and official name of the denomination with which Mr. O. had been identified. The choice, therefore, of another name, while it would not, if standing alone, prove a purpose to organize



a church separate from, and independent of, the German Reformed, does add strength to other facts found in this record.

3. A Christian experience and a Christian life are indispensable conditions of membership in this church, as well as morality and general correctness of deportment; and provision is made for the expulsion of those who cease to strive after holiness of heart. This was a thing unknown in the German Reformed church of that day.

4. Class-meetings are instituted, the manner of holding them described, and attendance thereupon, regularly, sickness and absence from home excepted, made a condition of church membership. Have class-meetings ever been instituted in German Reformed churches? We all know that they have not only *not* been introduced, but that they have been discountenanced and ridiculed. But this church, regarding the building up of each other in the most holy faith, as the primary object of their union, did not only make careful attendance upon these meetings the duty of both men and women, but they ordained that *no preacher unfavorable to class-meetings should ever serve them as a pastor.*

5. Not only secret, but *family* prayer is enjoined. Morning and evening each head of a family in the Otterbein church was expected to call his family around the family altar, and offer up the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Was the like duty enjoined in any German Reformed church in America at that period?

6. All worldly and sinful company was to be avoided, and foolish talking and jesting was made a ground for severe church censure.

7. The peculiar doctrines of Calvinism were not to be introduced. "No preacher can stay among us who *teacheth* the doctrine of predestination, or the impossibility of falling from grace, or who *holdeth* them as doctrinal points."

Ulric Zwingle was the founder of the German Reformed church, and he taught the doctrine of absolute predestination, as well as Calvin and the other reformers; but he did not impose it, as an article of faith, upon the church.\* On the decease of Zwingle and Ecolampadius, in 1531, the chief direction of the Reformed church devolved upon John Calvin, whose influence

\* Dr. L. Mayer, in History of all Denominations.

over it was commanding. The Heidelberg Catechism, which contains the doctrinal system of the German Reformed church, was published in 1563. It embodies the doctrine of absolute predestination, and the impossibility of falling from grace, but designedly places these doctrines in the background, and expresses them somewhat ambiguously. Dr. L. Mayer says—"The catechism, in its general character, is Calvinistic; but the doctrine of election is placed in the background." This is a fair statement of the case. Any one who will closely examine that catechism, can detect the doctrine of election there, as taught by Calvin, but it is "placed in the background."

But the Otterbein church constitution suffers it not to remain even in the background,—allows it no skulking-place behind an equivocal phraseology—but *specifically condemns it*, and will not allow its pastor to *hold*, much less *teach* it. This fact proves that the doctrinal basis of the German Evangelical church, founded by Otterbein, in Baltimore, was not the Heidelberg Catechism. It may be well to bear in mind, in connection with this point, that the doctrines of predestination and falling from grace had



been warmly controverted during the revival which originated the "Congregation of God in the Spirit." During that controversy, the revival party took decided Arminian ground, while the church party advocated absolute predestination and its accompanying errors.\*

8. But this record not only institutes an order of worship unknown to the Reformed church, and specifically condemns some of its fundamental doctrines, but it omits all *allusion* even to the Heidelberg catechism. No one would suspect, from the perusal of this record, that such a symbol of faith existed. Nor is there any allusion, whatever, to the cœtus of Pennsylvania, the synods of Holland, or to the German Reformed church. Can any one account for

\* When Count Zinzendorf came to Philadelphia, in 1742, he addressed a letter to John Philip Boehm, German Reformed pastor in the church at Philadelphia, asking permission to preach in a house owned jointly by the Reformed and the Lutherans. In this letter occurs this passage:—"But because I know you preach in the same church, and I am not inclined to the doctrine of absolute reprobation, as a doctrine which, in my religion, is confessedly held as wholly and fundamentally erroneous, I have thought it proper to inquire of you whether you have a right to present aught against my preaching there, since I do not wish to burden any one, or interfere with his rights." To this letter Mr. Boehm replied, "I will be understood as protesting, if any one should say that permission was given from the Reformed side, or from me, to Count Zinzendorf, to preach at the time and place belonging to us, *the Reformed*."—*Fathers of the Reformed Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 280, 281.

these omissions, except upon the supposition that this church was intended to be independent of the German Reformed church?

9. To place this case in a still clearer light, we will insert the substance of the regulations adopted in the *German Reformed church*, (the church served by Faber, Wallauer, etc.) a few years after Mr. Otterbein began to build this new and independent church,—regulations which seem to have been adopted under the impulse of desires for reform, stimulated by the success of Mr. Otterbein.

“All the members of the congregation shall regularly attend divine worship on the Sabbath; and, with the exception of poor persons, shall contribute to the support of the pastor and the congregation. All contentious persons shall not be regarded as church members. Those who fall into open sin shall be put away, and shall not be restored until they show sincere repentance and amendment of life, and declare their willingness to submit to the discipline of the church. Difficulties in the congregation that can not be adjusted, shall be referred to the synod. No foreign minister can preach in our church without the

consent of the pastor and consistory, and he must acknowledge the Reformed confessions of Switzerland and Holland. As soon as we can build a new church, all children that are not sick shall be baptized in the church, and their names registered; sponsors may be admitted, but only such as have been baptized and are communicants. In catechetical instruction, the Heidelberg Catechism only shall be used. The Lord's Supper shall be administered twice during the year, and all the communicants shall visit the pastor on a certain day before the communion, so that he may become well acquainted with them, and have an opportunity to speak with them about their spiritual state."\*

How marked the contrast between the regulations of this church and those adopted by the *Evangelical* Reformed church. No one could mistake the former for any thing but a German Reformed church, while no one, from the record, would even *suspect* that the latter belonged to that communion.

10. But items 14 and 15 place this question beyond all cavil. Mr. Otterbein, in

\* Centenary Sermon by Rev. Elias Heiner, p. 20.



connection with Mr. Boehm, had established numerous societies of converted people in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia; and, in obedience to the clearest expressions of the will of Providence, they had encouraged and authorized "helpers in the work of the Lord," to go forth exhorting the people to repentance, and preaching the glad tidings of salvation. We have already furnished a sketch of one of those helpers, (C. Newcomer) and others will be noticed in due time. Now, says the record, —No preacher can stay among us who will not care for those various churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, which churches, under the superintendence of William Otterbein, stand in fraternal unity with us, and who will not afford all possible encouragements to those exhorters and preachers who have arisen, or may yet arise, as helpers in those churches. To meet these provisions, the preacher in Otterbein's church, in Baltimore, must, of necessity, stand in full connection and communion with the preachers and churches of the United Brethren in Christ. No minister of the German Reformed church could or would comply with these rules.

These regulations, if we may except those which had, necessarily, a local application to the church at Baltimore, were regarded as the discipline of the United Brethren, in general; and, as such, were acceptable to all the churches, from and after the first conference, held in Baltimore, in 1789, up to the general conference, in 1815, when they entered, with little variation, under appropriate sections, into the book of Discipline. We like the spirit which pervades this document throughout. It breathes sincere piety and high-toned spirituality. It is a thoroughly evangelical church constitution. The Bible is its basis. From the second paragraph to the sixth, including the letter *g*, we have presented to us, in a concise and scriptural form, all that is most essential in constituting a Christian church, and the rules which should govern the members of a church, both in their individual and in their associated capacity. Written, as it is, in a sententious style, it must be read with care. In the original German it is one of the most compact and comprehensive productions of the pen. It bears the impress of a master mind; and, taken as a whole, and viewed in

connection with the prevailing prejudices of the times, it does honor to its author.

The points insisted upon are, the purity of the ministry; the piety of members; prompt attendance upon all the means of grace; class and prayer meetings; observance of the holy Sabbath; union and co-operation of ministers; free grace; instruction and education of children; separation from the world; pastoral visitation, and whatever else is essential to the usefulness, spirituality, and perpetuity of a church. As to the age of the discipline of the United Brethren in Christ, we care nothing, because it matters not whether it be of but yesterday, or of centuries past; but it is important that it agrees, in letter and in spirit, with the Holy Scriptures.\*

Mr. Otterbein's settlement in Baltimore was attended with evident tokens of the divine sanction. During nearly forty years of pastoral labor, he enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity. The little wooden church, in which his congregation first worshiped, gave place to a larger structure, and that in turn to the spacious edifice which now stands on Conway street.

\* Spayth, pp. 56, 57.



No man was ever more faithful in pastoral visitation. The poor, the sick, the widow and fatherless, the stranger, and the awakened sinner, were objects of unceasing attention. Giving himself wholly to his work, he had time for every duty. His congregations were usually very large, and profoundly attentive and solemn.

An educated German, who first heard Mr. Otterbein, in Baltimore, about the year 1800, and who was awakened under his preaching, and eventually himself introduced into the ministry, gives the following account of his first visit to the Evangelical Reformed church:

"Nearly half a century has passed since I became acquainted with Mr. Otterbein; and never will I forget the impression made upon my mind, when I first saw and heard him. It was on Good Friday, in the forenoon, when, by the persuasion of a friend, I entered the church where he officiated. A venerable, portly old man, above six feet in height, erect in posture, apparently about seventy-five years of age, stood before me. He had a remarkably high and prominent forehead. Gray hair fell smoothly down both sides of his head, on his tem-

ples; and his eyes were large, blue, and piercing, and sparkled with the fire of love which warmed the heart. In his appearance and manners there was nothing repulsive, but all was attractive, and calculated to command the most profound attention and reverence. He opened his lips in prayer to Jehovah! Oh, what a voice!—what a prayer! Every word thrilled my heart. I had heard many prayers, but never before one like this. The words of his text were these:—‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ As he proceeded in the elucidation of the text and its application, it seemed that every word was exactly adapted to my case, and intended for me. Every sentence smote me. A tremor at length seized on my whole frame; tears streamed from my eyes; and, utterly unable to restrain myself, I cried aloud.

“On the following Sabbath I again went to Mr. O.’s church, when he took special notice of the young stranger, and gave me

an invitation to visit him on the next day. I complied with the friendly request, with some reluctance, it is true, but was received with such unaffected tenderness and love, and addressed with so much solicitude for my salvation, that my heart was won."

The *cœtus* or synod of the Reformed church, shortly after Mr. O.'s successful establishment in Baltimore, re-considered and rescinded its action against his settlement there, and proposed to receive the new church under its care;\* but, as the congregation had formed an instructive acquaintance with the unevangelical elements which usually managed to control its action, and as the synod, about the same time, received Faber into its fellowship, they never accepted of the proposition. They were free from the official annoyance and control of those who sought to check the revival of religion, and they chose to remain free.

Mr. O. had not, however, formally, withdrawn from the Reformed church, and his name was retained, even up to the period of his death, on the records of the synod. For more than a quarter of a century, he had served as a minister in that church,

\* See resolution signed Conrad Bucher, quoted page 233.



with unsparing devotion, and had remained in her communion as long as a prospect remained of benefiting her thereby. But that hope, as we have seen, eventually vanished; and, although he had nothing to retract or recall of what he had said or done, and what he was still doing, the dissolving of those relations which, next to God, had possessed his heart, filled his soul with sorrow and anguish, at times, which knew no bounds: tears would fill his eyes, and, in big drops, run down his cheeks; and then again, as if he would lay hold on heaven for an answer, he would exclaim, "Oh! how can I give thee up!" There were, as we have seen, a number of devoted, evangelical men in that church, to whom he was bound by the strong ties of Christian love; and it seemed to him that a reformation of the church must be effected. In those dark hours of agony and wrestling in prayer, his best friends dared not attempt to console him, and his grief was fully known only to God. But, as his was the night of sorrow, his was, also, the joy of the morning. The Lord knows how to send comfort to his chosen ones. In one of those seasons of sadness and dis-

tress, the Bible opened, for the morning lesson, on the 49th chapter of Isaiah, beginning—"Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he led me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant," etc.

He occasionally visited the coetus, and neglected no opportunity of testifying his interest in the progress of vital piety in the Reformed church. Persecution, and even the spiteful expulsion of his bosom friend and co-laborer, G. A. Guething, never embittered his feelings toward her. After six years of absence from the synod, when that body met in Baltimore, toward the close of his life, a committee was appointed to wait on him, and request a visit from him. Bending under the weight of four score years, and leaning upon a long staff, which he carried to support him, he went with the committee. When he arrived, an opportunity was given him to speak. He arose and addressed the synod in a most feeling manner, and strove to impress the minds of the ministers pres-

ent with the importance of experimental religion,—of the new birth, and the great necessity of preaching it to the people distinctly and plainly, as men who must give account to God. After he had taken his seat, Mr. Becker,\* who, about that time, assumed the pastoral charge of the German Reformed church in Baltimore, arose and opposed the views he had advanced, and answered him roughly. Mr. O. heard him through with his accustomed meekness, and then, taking his cane and hat, he bade the preachers farewell, bowed, and retired, never to return again.

Mr. Otterbein's pulpit in Baltimore was open to the Methodists, and was occasionally occupied by the most distinguished bishops and ministers of that church. When absent on his frequent and long itinerant tours, his place was supplied by Gue-

\* This was Christian L. Becker, a very popular man in the synod with the dominant church party. He was the man who made the motion, in 1804, for the expulsion from the synod, "without delay," of G. A. Guething. He was, for a long time, pastor in Baltimore, and Dr. Heiner thus sums up the result of his labors there. "Large audiences waited on his ministry, and his labors were highly appreciated. During his administration, he baptized (children and adults) 597, and confirmed 151; and yet the number of communicants does not appear to have increased. Many of the congregation were more delighted with the doctor's fine oratory, than they were pleased to attend to their duty at the Lord's table."—Cen. Sermon, page 30.



thing, Newcomer, Boehm, and others of the preachers who had been raised up as co-laborers in the reformation. Although some of those co-laborers were, in common phrase, uneducated men, and went into his pulpit with trembling, yet they were always received and honored, by the congregation, as duly authorized ambassadors of Jesus.

## CHAPTER X.

THE CONFERENCES OF 1789-1791—DRAKSEL,  
FFRIMMER, NEIDING, AND OTHERS.

THE protracted and bloody war of the Revolution, which resulted in the separation of the American colonies from Great Britain, and in the establishment of the Federal Republic, interrupted the progress of evangelical religion for a long period.

While the great body of the people favored the war, and were willing to shed their blood and exhaust their treasure to secure the independence of the country, there were many who preferred a continued subjection to the British crown, and lamented and opposed the measures of the Whig party: these last were denominated Tories, and the name has become odious to the American people.

But there was another party, which usually enjoyed the respect even of its enemies, on account of the sterling honesty,

honor, and love of the right and of freedom, which characterized its adherents. It may be denominated the Peace Party. It was composed of those Christians who were opposed to wars, offensive and defensive, under all circumstances. These men could not, of course, engage in the martial contest for liberty or death. They were generally men of superior moral courage,—men who could face death at the stake—who could die calmly for the truth, but who could not fight for it with “carnal weapons.”

The bitter contests of party, the levying of taxes and supplies, the drafting of fighting men, the marching and counter-marching of armies, the bloody battles, and feverish excitement and anxiety of the public mind, during the eight years' war, called away the attention of the people from that wisdom which is pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and good fruits, whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and whose paths are peace. Many of the infant societies of United Brethren were scattered abroad, as sheep without a shepherd; and ministers and members were subjected to sufferings,



and losses, and hardships, which no pen has ever recorded.

Nevertheless, after peace was restored, and the disordered elements had become settled, numerous societies of United Brethren were found among the German people in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Converts had been made to Jesus, large meetings held, prayer-meetings kept up, class-meetings attended, and some preachers added to the faithful band, in the midst of the national struggle.

From the year 1766 to 1789,—a period of twenty-three years,—the preachers who felt that they were United Brethren, and who were co-operating in the revival movement, met together as often as once a year, and, usually, at a great meeting, where, in mutual and brotherly counsel, they attended to such business as would properly belong to a presbytery, classis, or conference. As the number of laborers increased, and as applications for authority to preach, from those whom God had manifestly called and qualified for the work, multiplied, these informal conferences became more necessary and important. Mr. Otterbein usually presided; and his influence, especially upon

the rising ministry, was salutary in a high degree.

At length, however, a formal conference was deemed necessary. The work had become so far extended that it became impracticable to attend to the necessary business of the church at the great meetings. Accordingly, the FIRST CONFERENCE, regularly convened, was held in Baltimore, in 1789. Fourteen preachers were recognized as members of this conference. Of these, seven were present, viz.: William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, George A. Guething, Christian Newcomer, Henry Weidner, Adam Lehman, and John Ernst. The absent members were—Benedict Schwope, Henry Baker, Simon Herre, Frederick Schaffer, Martin Kreider, Christopher Grosh, and Abraham Draksel. Owing to conscientious objections entertained by some of the Brethren, no record had been kept of the number of members or of societies.

Of the preachers who belonged to the first conference, MARTIN KREIDER was, Otterbein and Boehm excepted, the oldest minister in the society. He was a true Aaronite, a strong pillar in the church, where he stood faithful to his brethren, to

all men, and to God, during a long life. He was the father of John Kreider, the sweet singer, the sound and laborious preacher, who, like his father, was faithful to the end of life.

CHRISTOPHER GROSH, another member of the conference of 1789, was greatly beloved and respected. He was a prudent counsellor, a peacemaker, and a preacher mighty in the Scriptures. For more than forty years, he was a co-worker with the Brethren, and, when full of years, was gathered with the elect of God.

ABRAHAM DRAKSEL was born in Lebanon county, Pa., in 1753. He was brought up in the Amish or Omish society.

This society has been regarded as a secession from the Mennonites. It derived its name from Jacob Amen, a native of Amenthal, in Switzerland, and a rigid Mennonite preacher of the seventeenth century. The principal difference between the Amish or "Hooker Mennonites," as they have been called, because they wear hooks instead of buttons, and the other Mennonites, consists in their greater simplicity of dress, and strictness of discipline. Like other Mennonites, they take no oaths; administer baptism



to adults only; allow no fixed salaries to preachers; consider war, in all its forms, antichristian and unjust; allow all their members to exhort and expound the Scriptures in their assemblies, and suffer none of them to become a public charge.

Mr. Draksel, being an obedient and loving son of kind parents, and leading a strictly moral and, in the estimation of his Amish brethren, pious life, was, in his twenty-sixth year, encouraged to take part in preaching, which he did with such grace and ability as he had. Soon after he began to preach, however, he felt the need of a change of heart, and, through the grace of God, experienced that change. The love of Christ, which was to him a blessed reality, constrained him to preach it to his brethren; and, in the warmth and joy of his first love, he had hoped that the doctrine of the new birth, and the news of his own happy conversion, would be well received by them; but it was not so. That the kingdom of Christ did not consist in rigid outward rules, or forms, or ordinances, but in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, they would not believe.

On the contrary, they were offended and

scandalized by the new and heartfelt experience and preaching of Draksel, and determined to silence him. After having admonished him the third time, without producing the desired change, either in his religious views or manner of preaching, they sent a special deputation of the elders of the society to announce to him the decision of his brethren, that he should be silent. When these elders had finished their work and departed, it appeared to him that angels came and ministered unto him, and he felt such comfort and peace in God as he had never before enjoyed.

Choosing to obey God rather than man, he continued to preach, and, in 1782, became associated with the United Brethren, with whom he labored forty-three years. In 1804, he removed to Westmoreland county, Pa., and settled his family near Mt. Pleasant, from which place he made frequent preaching tours into Ohio. He was an acceptable and excellent preacher, and a successful evangelist. By his labors and sacrifices, the good cause was advanced, and he will live long in the memory of the church.

“His countenance was an index to the

grace and purity that reigned in his heart. With his fine silvery beard, he resembled the patriarchs of old. Of sweet and humble spirit, a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, he was a pattern of piety."\* At the age of three score and twelve years, his end was joy and peace. Such was Abraham Draksel, the silenced Amish preacher, and a member of the United Brethren conference of 1789.

HENRY BAKER was a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Of the others, we can not speak particularly. They were, however, of like spirit and character.

The SECOND CONFERENCE was held in Paradise township, York county, Pa., at the house of Brother Spangler, in 1791. Twenty-three preachers were recognized as members of the conference, whose names follow:—*Present*—Wm. Otterbein, Martin Boehm, George A. Guething, Christian Newcomer, Adam Lehman, John Ernst, J. G. Pfrimmer, John Neiding, and Benedict Sanders. *Absent*—Henry Weidner, Henry Baker, Martin Kreider, F. Schaffer, Christopher Grosh, Abraham Draksel, Christian Crum, G. Fortenbach, D. Strickler, J. Hershey, Felix

\* Spayth, pp. 160, 161.



Light, Simon Herre, John Hautz, and Benedict Schwope. During the two years which had intervened between the first conference, in 1789, and the second, in 1791, nine preachers had been added to the society. Henry Baker and John Hautz, both men of earnest piety and zeal, had removed to the west; Baker to Tennessee, and Hautz to Kentucky. The fruits of their labors in those new fields were by no means inconsiderable. They were gathered, however, by other societies.

Of the members of the conference of 1791, J. G. Pfrimmer and J. Neiding deserve especial notice, as they were, for a long series of years, very active, prominent, and successful ministers.

JOHN G. PFRIMMER was a native of Alsace, an old German province on the Rhine, ceded to France in 1648. He was born in 1762, and was brought up in the Reformed church. He emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1788, where he soon became fully enlightened in relation to experimental religion, and was made a partaker of divine grace. Having received a good education, and believing it to be his duty to preach, he began, soon after his conversion, to exhort, and to preach

Christ and him crucified. His eminent fitness to preach manifested itself in the impressions which his discourses made upon his hearers; and, in view of his education, talent, grace, and commanding powers as a speaker, he was regarded as a great accession to the strength and influence of the rising church.

Being a man of strong intellectual powers, having a mind well stored with useful knowledge, and especially with Biblical lore, and possessing withal a peculiar nervous energy which sent a thrill through all his words, his sermons were not only original and instructive, but stirring and abiding in their impression. He brought things new and old out of the rich treasury of inspiration, applied the truth, with great force, to the consciences of men, and was always ready with an appropriate text,—a “thus saith the Lord”—to fasten it there with power.\*

By his energetic and efficient labors, many heard and received the Gospel, and the word of God was multiplied and spread abroad through a large part of Pennsylvania; first in its eastern counties, then in

\* Spayth, pp. 70, 71.

the Susquehannah valley, and subsequently in the counties of Westmoreland, Somerset, and Washington, west of the Alleghanies. He commenced his labors west of the mountains as early as 1800; and, in 1809, he followed the tide of emigration westward through Ohio into Harrison county, Indiana, where he finally settled, without, however, intermitting his itinerant labors. After his settlement in Indiana, he extended his travels eastward, sometimes as far as Pennsylvania and Maryland. He was a member of the general conference held in Ohio in 1825.

JOHN NEIDING was born in Berks county, Pa., in 1765, soon after which his father removed into the neighborhood of Harrisburg, Dauphin county, where John was raised. His parents were Mennonites, and he was, as a matter of course, trained up carefully in that society. Being of a serious turn of mind, and maintaining a good character, while quite a youth, he was received by baptism into the church.

When he had reached his twenty-fifth year, he was chosen, by lot, to be a preacher. At this period, and, indeed, for some time previously, he had been dissatisfied with his religious state, and was earnestly



seeking for a clean heart and a token of God's love. His appointment to the ministry caused his desire for a clean heart, and a token, (as he expressed it) that he was a child of God, to become still more intense, and he prayed more frequently and fervently for these blessings which he knew were promised to all those who should come unto God, through Jesus Christ. He soon found, and was enabled to rejoice in, a knowledge of sins forgiven, in the witness of the Spirit, or token of love divine, and in the possession of a clean heart.

Having an experimental salvation from sin, he was constrained to preach it to others; and, with great earnestness, he began to declare the nature and necessity of the new birth. He insisted, with the warmth and confidence which a fresh and genuine experience inspires, upon the Savior's declaration to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto you, *ye must be born again.*"

This was more than his Mennonite brethren expected from him, and more, unhappily, than a majority of them were willing to receive. While preaching with much feeling, some time after his conversion, many in the congregation began to weep,

and some to cry loud enough to be heard. This was too much for the old minister who sat near to him, and, taking Neiding by the arm, he said, "Oh! not so, brother! You press the subject too far!" To this he quietly replied, "I will press it still further. There is no stopping this side of heaven!"

Among all the brethren yet noticed, or hereafter to be noticed, Brother Neiding was the Nathaniel. He possessed an excellent spirit,—meek, gentle, just. Of them that are without, he had a good report. The virtues and graces requisite in an elder in the church of God, were all exhibited in his character; and the clear light of his beautiful and holy life, which shed a luster along his pathway, was never extinguished, nor ever suffered even a momentary eclipse.

As a preacher, he was able, by sound doctrine, to exhort and convince the gainsayers. His language was select and chaste, and his manner inimitable. He had a voice, clear and musical as a silver bell, at complete command. Every movement of his body, of his hands, and even of his fingers, was graceful, expressive, and calcu-

lated to impress the Gospel theme. To the sinner, that clear and musical voice rang a painful alarm through every avenue of his soul, and he could not forget it; but to the broken-hearted penitent, to the returning prodigal, to the wounded and disconsolate spirit, it sounded forth grace, mercy, and peace through Jesus, in tones as sweet and heavenly as if they had really descended from the celestial climes. As a builder of the church edifice, the materials in his hands were "gold, silver, and precious stones."

His popularity was necessarily great among the evangelical portion of all the churches; and he received and accepted numerous friendly invitations, to participate in the dedication of houses of worship, extended to him by Lutheran, German Reformed, and other churches.

"Yet, be it remembered,—nay, rather in charity let it be forgotten—that John Neiding was deemed "irregular" by the Menonite church, and was thrust out, as had been Martin Boehm and Abraham Draksel."

In noticing his demise, it will be seen that he spent a long and useful life in the holy



ministry. Entering upon the work in the morning of life, he endured the heat and burden of the day without shrinking from the heavy tasks which it imposed upon him; and when that day declined, and snowy locks covered his head, he labored on still with undiminished zeal; and the last hour and minute of his life he devoted to preaching Jesus. "His last sermons, and especially those preached at camp-meetings, are still fresh in the minds of those who heard them, and are among the sweetest recollections of their lives."\*

\* Spayth, pp. 73, 74, 75.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE WORK ADVANCING—INCIDENTS—CONFERENCE OF 1800.

AT the conferences of 1789 and 1791, and at the subsequent conferences, to all of which special attention need not be invited, the preachers who could devote their whole time to traveling, were assigned particular fields of labor, upon which they labored as itinerants. Others were appointed to hold great meetings, designated at the conferences, in different sections of the country, and to devote as much of their time to the work of evangelization as their circumstances would permit. All the preachers and brethren, under the judicious and kindly superintendence of Otterbein and Boehm, devoted themselves, with remarkable zeal and singleness of aim, to the one great work of extending and strengthening the kingdom of God.

The preachers, especially on their itiner-

ant tours, suffered much from foolish prejudice, false and scandalous reports, and insane bigotry; and, until they became well acquainted, were generally regarded as "wolves in sheep's clothing," "false prophets," "enchanters," and as the "filth and offscouring of all things." It was no uncommon thing for Otterbein, Guething, Pfrimmer, Newcomer, Boehm, and the other early United Brethren, to have the doors of houses erected for public worship,—usually Lutheran, German Reformed, and Menonite—locked against them. Of this they never made complaint. The world outside was large, and it was their field; and as they were favored with plenty of hearers, they were always ready to "hold forth the word of life" in grave-yards, groves, barns, school-houses, or private dwellings.

In a note in his journal, under date of April, 1795, Christian Newcomer says:—"This day I came, in company with Bro. Guething, to what is called Berner's church; but we were not permitted to preach therein; so Brother Guething preached in the grave-yard adjoining the church, to a numerous congregation, with remarkable power." Two weeks later, he writes:—"We



held a meeting at a place called the Black Ridge church; here we were also refused permission to preach in the church, and Brother Guething spoke in the school-house adjoining."

The opposition of some of the churches referred to is not to be wondered at, when the usual effects following the preaching of the Brethren evangelists are considered. As an illustration, notice a meeting held in a church whose doors, happily, *were not* locked against them. This meeting was held in October, 1797. We quote from Newcomer's journal:

"A sacramental meeting was commenced in Redland, York county, Pa. The first sermon was preached by Pfrimmer; I followed. Sunday 22.—This forenoon, Brother Martin Boehm delivered the first discourse; I then spoke from Heb. ii.: 5. While I was speaking, a young woman suddenly arose from her seat and exclaimed, '*Oh! Lord, I am lost!*' This created a stir in the congregation, and *one of the trustees went down on his knees and cried for mercy!* Another woman commenced crying out to the Lord to have mercy on her. Her husband, hearing her, made his way to the seat, and

there they both wept bitterly. Bless the Lord! To me, and to many others, this was a precious time. 23d.—This forenoon, we had our love-feast; the brethren and sisters declared, willingly, what God had done for their souls, and, when the meeting closed, they retired greatly strengthened and encouraged."

A woman crying out, in agony, "I am lost," husbands and wives weeping aloud over their sins, a church trustee on his knees, pleading for mercy, and the whole winding up with a love-feast meeting, in which the woman who cried, "I am lost," told how she had found Him who came to seek and save the lost,—in which the husband and wife rejoiced together in a new-found Savior, and the trustee related how that, up to that time, he had lived in sin and blindness, were things hardly to be countenanced in every church. We wonder not that many doors were locked by those who would not enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, and who were disposed to hinder those that were entering.

Of a quarterly meeting held in Pennsylvania, in 1796, we have the following brief sketch in Newcomer's journal:

"8th.—This forenoon, Brother Guething spoke to the people with demonstration and power: I think not a few were convinced of their awful situation. In the afternoon, I spoke from these words:—"How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation?" On the 9th, we had a powerful time; many poor souls confessed openly that they had rebelled against their God, lamented that they had spent their best days in sin and folly, and cried for mercy. Among the rest, a woman came forward, leading her daughter by the hand, both crying. The mother said, 'Here is my child; for some time she has opposed her husband in religion, but now she is convinced of her error, and seeks an interest in your prayers.' The daughter cried, 'Oh! yes, pray for me, for I am forever lost!' Blessed be God, she, with many others, found mercy."

Many pages might be filled, from New-comer's journal, with very condensed notices of the great and glorious meetings, usually of three days' continuance, held between 1785 and 1800. A few of these notices deserve a permanent record in these pages, as showing the spirit of the early Brethren, and



the manifestations of the presence and power of God which attended their labors.

Of a three days' meeting, held not far from Martin Boehm's, in Lancaster county, Pa., we have the following notice:—

"May 21st, 1797.—This day the grace of God was powerfully displayed; several brethren delivered the word with energy and power. On the sacramental occasion, we had a melting time; many approached the table of the Lord with streaming eyes. 22d.—This forenoon, we had our love-feast; it surely was a great time; the brethren and sisters spoke freely and feelingly of the dealings of God with their souls, and many were filled with the dying love of Jesus, and some to overflowing; even my poor soul received a substantial blessing. Glory be to God and the Lamb forever!"

A few days later in the same year and month, a meeting was commenced near Lebanon. "Brother Crum preached the first sermon, when many hearts were tendered, and tears flowed in abundance. Sunday, 28th.—Before day this morning, I received a powerful blessing at the hand of God. I could not remain any longer in bed, but arose praising and shouting, giving glory to

God for all his mercies. Brother Boehm preached the first sermon this forenoon; Brother Crum followed. In the afternoon, I spoke from Ps. ii.: 5, 8. In the evening, we celebrated the dying love of Jesus. This was the last day of our meeting, and the best day of the feast. Many were so filled with the love of Jesus that, like the disciples on the day of Pentecost, they appeared drunken. My heart was not left empty; but how could it be otherwise, when grace flows so abundantly out of the well of salvation. All may partake; all may come and drink of the water of life freely, without money and without price.

"June 3d, 1797.—This day, the sacramental meeting at Antietam. Even at the beginning, the Lord was present in power. In the evening, we held a prayer-meeting at Brother S. Baker's. Several brethren from Baltimore were present: we had a good time. Sunday, 4th.—This forenoon, William Otterbein preached from Ephesians ii.: 1, 6: —'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins; wherein, in times past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now

worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' O, how conclusively did he reason! How did he endeavor to persuade his hearers to work out the salvation of their souls! How did he try to convince all of the necessity of vital, experimental religion—of a thorough change of heart! The congregation was uncommonly large, and all seemed to pay the most profound attention." The sacrament was administered, and Draksel preached in the afternoon. "5th.—This day we had an exceedingly glorious time. A great number, both male and female, young people and hoary-headed sinners, were convicted, and some happily converted to God."

Space must be given for a notice of one more of those glorious gatherings of God's



people. This was convened in Cumberland county, Pa., in the year 1800.

“Brother Neiding commenced the meeting. At night attended a prayer-meeting. The Lord was powerfully with us. Sunday, 25th.—This morning, Bro. Boehm preached with great power. In the afternoon, I preached from 1 Peter i., 19, with considerable liberty. Before the close of the meeting, several young persons, of both sexes, were brought under conviction, crying aloud, with streaming eyes, for mercy. We prayed with them for some time; and several found the pearl of great price in the pardon of their sins. 26th.—To-day, Bro. Boehm preached again, on the sufferings and death of our Savior, with extraordinary power. \* \* Every heart present was touched and tendered. Two young women cried out, ‘Oh! Lord, what shall we do? We desire to be converted to God, and get religion.’ They stated that their father was prayerless; that he cursed and swore, and said, if they joined these people, he would never let them come into his house. Others cried out, ‘I am lost! I am lost, and undone! Pray for us! oh! pray for us!’ In this manner, several

hours passed away, the shouts of salvation following the bitter penitential cries."

The Brethren ministry of this period were of the apostolic stamp. They visited the sick, hunted up the lost sheep, found their way to the prisoner's cell and the felon's dungeon, sought out the destitute, visited from house to house, instructed the children, exhorted the youth,\* and, in every way, exerted themselves to the utmost to save men from their sins, and build them up in the faith of the Gospel.

In this great work, they were encouraged and aided, not only by the newly-arrived Methodist evangelists, but by those spiritual men in the Reformed church, whom we have named, such as Hendel and Wagner;† and men of similar faith and

\* To-day, I came to Brother Pfrimmer's. About thirty children had assembled at his house, to whom he was giving religious instruction. Some were under conviction. I also spoke to them. Their hearts were sensibly touched. May the Lord convert them truly.—Newcomer's Journal, May, 1800.

† This day, October 8th, 1797, the church in this place (Shaffers-town) was dedicated to God. Rev. Mr. Wagner delivered the first sermon. In the afternoon, Brother Guething preached with a great blessing. By candle-light, Rev. Mr. Hendel delivered a handsome discourse. The next day, Rev. Mr. Rohauser preached in the forenoon, Lochman and Williams in the evening, and Newcomer at night.—N. J., p. 32.

spirit in the Lutheran church, such as Staunch\* and the elder Kurtz.

During the last decade of the eighteenth century, quite a number of very promising young ministers were admitted into the conference. These were the fruit of the revival of vital godliness among the German people. The number of members in the communion of the church can not be ascertained. No enumeration had been taken, and there was a very general disinclination to adopt any such measure. The ministerial force numbered thirty-one. Of these, several, as before observed, were young men, and a few only of the whole number were able to devote their whole time to the ministry of the word. Otterbein and Boehm, although still active and very laborious preachers, had each passed his threescore and ten; and Guething had nearly reached his threescore. Others of the ministers were venerable in years, and had seen hard service.

On the 25th of September, A. D. 1800,

\* The Rev. Mr. Staunch invited us (Brother Draksel and myself) to return with him to his house. In the evening, a select company assembled, and we had much religious conversation, and a little prayer-meeting. This minister and companion are pious. May God bless them abundantly.—Newcomer's Jour.



the conference assembled at Peter Kemp's, in Frederick county, Md.

*Preachers present*—Otterbein, Boehm, Gue-thing, Pfrimmer, Newcomer, Lehman, Draksel, Christian Crum, Henry Crum, John Hershey, J. Geisinger, Henry Boehm, D. Aurauf, and Jacob Bowlus.

*Absent*—Neiding, Schaffer, Kreider, Grosh, Abraham Mayer, G. Fortenbaugh, David Snyder, Adam Reigel, A. Hershey, Christian Hershey of Pa., John Ernst, M. Thomas of Md., Simon Herre, Daniel Strickler, John Senseny, Abraham Heistand, and I. Niswander of Va.

In this conference, although the number of ministers was not large, the various parts of the church were well represented, and it was a session of more than usual importance.

Before the business was introduced, Mr. Otterbein prayed, read a portion of Scripture, and delivered a short address. Each preacher then made a plain and definite statement of his experience, and of his purposes in regard to the service of God in the work of the ministry. All expressed a determination, notwithstanding the toils and trials, the persecution and poverty, that

awaited them, to continue to labor for the honor of God, and the good of mankind.

Each minister was then examined separately, respecting his progress in the divine life, and success in the work. Especial prominence appears to have been given, in the examination, to the interior life of the ministry.

Up to this period, the church had passed under the name of UNITED BRETHREN, a name which had been previously borne, as we have seen, by three bodies of Christians, of similar spirit, drawn together under similar circumstances, one of which existed long prior to the reformation in the sixteenth century. And, indeed, when converted Mennonites, Lutherans, Reformed, Tunkers, and Amish, were drawn together at great meetings, like the one at Isaac Long's, and those which succeeded it, and when, by providential circumstances, they were compressed into an ecclesiastical organization, no other name seemed appropriate. Its adoption was a moral necessity. A similar providential union had made it a necessity at Fulneck, in 1457; and, at Herrnhut, two hundred and seventy years later. When Count Zinzendorf organized a union church at Herrnhut,

in 1727, he was not to be blamed for appropriating the most suitable name; and the same apology, if what God orders and approves needs an apology, will hold good in the case of the United Brethren in Christ.

It was suggested, however, at the conference of 1800, and not without reason, that this name, when employed in wills, deeds, and other legal instruments, might give rise to legal difficulties; and, although a change in the name was not deemed expedient nor desirable, yet, to avoid misapplication and misunderstanding, the words, "IN CHRIST," were added. Hence, since 1800, the proper name of the denomination has been, "THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST."

The next important item of business transacted, was the election of William Otterbein and Martin Boehm to the office of superintendent or bishop.

It must not be inferred, however, that, up to this period, the church had been without a superintendent. That office had been filled with eminent ability and faithfulness, by Otterbein, up to this period. He had been placed in that responsible relation, not by a formal vote of his brethren.



ren, but by the force of those providential circumstances which gave rise to the church—in other words, by the election of God. The care of all the churches had rested upon him; to him all eyes were directed for counsel; every preacher, without an exception, deferred to his judgment; and such was the veneration and affection with which he was regarded, and the confidence in his wisdom and prudence, that, if he said to one, Go, he went willingly; and to another, Come, he came gladly. It was deemed proper, however, at this conference, to elect two superintendents. The choice of the second fell upon Boehm, who, in influence and in usefulness, was second only to Otterbein.

On the forenoon of the second day of the conference, Otterbein preached from Amos iv., 12, and was followed by Boehm.

The day succeeding the close of the conference, a sacramental meeting was commenced, at which, on the Sabbath following, Mr. Otterbein discoursed from Rev. iii.: 7-12. How appropriate this text to the time and the occasion! "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that

is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth: I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." "He spoke," says Newcomer, "with astonishing clearness and perspicuity, and appeared to be inspired with the gift of interpretation."

The measures adopted by the conference of 1800, gave a fresh impetus to the cause of religion. During the succeeding year, ten great meetings, some of which were distinguished by remarkable blessings, were held in different portions of the country. Conversions were numerous, and some of them singularly powerful. At Antietam, and at Abraham Mayer's, especially, grace triumphed, although, as usual, Satan raged and stirred up persecution against the laborers and the converts. At the former place, "father Otterbein," says Newcomer, "preached," on Sabbath forenoon, "with such power and grace, that almost every soul on the ground seemed to be pierced to the heart, \* \* and the attention of

every soul was riveted to the spot. I spoke after him, but only for a short time, when the people broke forth in lamentations for mercy." The succeeding day is described as "a day of grace," "a Pentecost," a day of the outpouring of the Spirit, as in days of old.

In Virginia, the labors of the ministers and brethren were attended with the rich effusions of divine grace. At some of the great meetings, the people fell before the Lord like mown grass; and if the distress of the penitents was deep, and their cries bitter, so was the succeeding joy.

The preachers, for want of time, were hurried away from these meetings, their battle-fields, while yet sinners trembled, tears were falling fast, and mourners were crying, "We are lost!"

It often occurred that the parting hour was an hour of redemption to numerous broken-hearted mourners. The thought that the meeting must be closed, and the faithful ministers depart hastily to other fields of toil, but deepened the wounds already made, and, with holy violence and an agony of earnestness which few can understand or appreciate, they would lay hold on heaven



and cry, "I will not let thee go!" "Lord, save, or I perish!" Preachers and people gather once more around them. All hearts are melted. One more prayer is offered. Faith grows mighty, almost omnipotent. Heaven is opened again. The Holy Spirit descends. A shout breaks forth, of "Glory! glory! glory!" Then the evangelists depart, and go on their way to another meeting rejoicing.

"On thy church, O, power divine,  
Cause thy glorious face to shine  
Till the nations from afar,  
Hail her as their guiding star.

"Then shall God, with mighty hand,  
Scatter blessings o'er the land,  
And the world's remotest bound,  
With the voice of praise resound.

"Lord, thy church hath seen thee rise  
To thy temple in the skies:  
God, my Savior! God, my king!  
Hear thy ransomed people sing.

"When, in glories all divine,  
Through the earth thy church shall shine,  
Kings, in prayer and praise, shall wait,  
Bending at thy temple's gate."\*

\* Spayth, pp. 84, 85.

## CHAPTER XII.

CONFERENCES OF 1801 AND 1802—GREAT  
MEETINGS—LOVE-FEASTS.

ON the 23d of September, A. D. 1801, the conference again assembled at Peter Kemp's, in Frederick county, Maryland. There were twenty ministers present, whose names follow:—Otterbein, Boehm, Newcomer, Strickler, Guething, Peter Senseny, Neiding, Daniel Long, Mayer, Schaffer, Geisinger, John Hershey, Thomas Winter, L. Duckwald, Snyder, Peter Kemp, Matthias Kessler, Christian Crum, Abraham Hershey, and Thomas. Peter Senseny, Long, Winter, Duckwald, and Kessler, were new members. The names of the ministers who were absent are not given in the minutes.

The conference was opened with prayer and an address by Otterbein. He stated in the address, and dwelt upon the truth, *“that salvation comes alone through Jesus Christ, and that, if we are delivered from sin,*

*we must thank him only for it."* The first day of the session was taken up in a relation of personal Christian experience, and a general statement, by the preachers, of the labors, trials, and success of the year. These relations and statements were of a very affecting and interesting character. The reports in relation to the progress of the cause in the different parts of the work, were highly encouraging. Success in winning souls had attended the labors of the ministers pretty generally, and the societies were in a state of prosperity. The second day's session was opened with reading from Revelation 14th chapter, and "prayer to Almighty God," (we quote the minutes) "that he may make us willing to preach the Gospel, and that he may enable us to live as we preach to others." The members of the conference were then all examined in relation to their moral and official character, and their usefulness in the ministry. When the question was asked, "Who belongs to the itinerancy?" the following brethren gave their names:—Christian Newcomer, David Snyder, M. Thomas, Abraham Hershey, Daniel Strickler, Abraham Mayer,



Frederick Schaffer, David Long, John Neiding, and Peter Kemp.

The following important resolutions were adopted:—

“1. Resolved, That each preacher, after preaching, shall hold a conversation with those who may be seeking the conversion of their souls, whoever they may be.

“2. Resolved, That the preachers shall aim to be short, and to avoid all superfluous words in their sermons and prayers; yet, should the Spirit of God lead them to lengthen their sermons, it is their duty to follow the divine direction.”

To this second resolution was appended this simple and appropriate petition,—“Oh! God, give us wisdom and understanding to do all according to thy will. Amen.”

It was also resolved that each preacher who could not attend the annual sessions of the conference, should give the conference due notice of the fact.

On the last day of the conference, Mr. Otterbein, as was his custom, preached a conference sermon, from Jude, 20th to the 25th inclusive. The reader will not be displeased to find the whole text quoted here:

“20. But ye, beloved, building up your

selves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

"21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

"22. And of some have compassion, making a difference:

"23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

"24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

"25. To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

The leading topics of this discourse were

1. The sanctity of the ministerial office.  
2. The character of the men who should take upon them this office. They must be men of faith, of prayer, and full of the Holy Ghost.

3. The duties of the office.

4. Its great responsibilities.

While treating upon the responsibilities of the ministerial office, the force of his remarks were overpowering. Tears flowed

from every eye, and preachers and people wept together. The impressions made by this sermon were not soon forgotten. New-comer says: "The impression made upon my poor heart will, I trust, abide with me as long as life shall last."

The meetings, during the conference, were attended with the divine blessing, and a number of conversions to God occurred. Great unanimity and brotherly love prevailed throughout. On the third day, conference adjourned to meet the following October. The minutes are signed thus:—

MARTIN BOEHM.

WILLIAM OTTERBEIN.

GEORGE ADAM GUETHING.

The CONFERENCE OF 1802 met at the house of Brother John Cronise, in Frederick county, Md., not far from Peter Kemp's, October 6th, 1802. Otterbein and Boehm presided. The conference was opened with singing and prayer, by Boehm, followed by an address from Otterbein. The preachers were all examined, according to rule, as usual, and, to their comfort and joy, all were found to be walking in the path of duty. No circumstance occurred during the



session, to interrupt the peace and harmony of the deliberations.

The only new name which appears upon the minutes, is that of William Ambrose, of Virginia. Two brethren were authorized to exhort, and Ludwig Duckwald and John Neiding received permission to "administer all the ordinances of the house of God, according to the Scriptures."

The question in regard to keeping a register of the names of the members in the church, again came up, and was discussed. A motion, favoring such a register, was lost by a vote of nine against three. A number of the members were, probably, neutral, as they did not vote at all.

The subject of prayer-meetings was also brought before the conference, and a resolution was passed, enjoining it upon preachers to establish and maintain prayer-meetings at every appointment where at all practicable.

Some proposals were made in regard to the collection of a fund for the relief of poor ministers. It does not appear, however, that any definite plan was fixed upon. The following resolution was passed:—

"Resolved, That, if any of our preachers

shall do any thing wrong, it shall be the duty of the preacher next (or nearest) to him, to talk to him, privately, in relation to the wrong. If he does not listen to him, or accept his advice, he shall take with him one or two more preachers; and if he does not listen to them, he shall be silenced until the next session of conference."

The following resolution was also adopted:—  
Resolved, That, in case one of our superintendents—W. Otterbein or Martin Boehm—should die, another minister shall be elected to fill the place. This is the wish of those two brethren, and the unanimous wish of all the preachers present."

From this resolution, it appears that, in 1802, the utility and importance of the office of general superintendent, or bishop, was duly appreciated by the venerable fathers, Otterbein and Boehm, and by their younger brethren.

The conference sermon was preached on the second day of the session, by Otterbein, from Heb. xiii.: 17. He was followed in an address by Boehm.

In the afternoon of the third day of the session, after the business had all been dis-

patched, and just before the adjournment, the conference listened to another address from Otterbein. "He exhorted us," says Newcomer, "particularly, to be careful to preach no other doctrine than that which is plainly laid down in the Bible; that nothing less than a new creature in Christ Jesus will be acceptable in the sight of God; that we should be ardently and diligently engaged in the work of the Lord; and, lastly, that we should love one another, and, for Jesus' sake, suffer and endure all things."

The preachers went to their fields of labor full of faith and the Holy Ghost. A few days after the conference, a quarterly meeting was held at Hoffman's, in Rockingham county, Va. Let the good Newcomer give us, in his own simple language, an account of this meeting:

"Brother Guething spoke with tender compassion; the people began to cry aloud. The meeting was held in a barn. When Brother Guething had closed his remarks, I arose, went among the people in the congregation, exhorting them to accept of the overtures of mercy. Presently a young man fell on my neck, crying and calling



aloud: 'Oh! Mr. Newcomer, what shall I do?—what shall I do to be saved?' I replied, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Instantly, two others (who were brothers) fell on their knees, each crying, 'What shall I do? I am lost forever. Oh! Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.' A young woman fell down, crying for mercy: her sister, who was sitting beside her, with a child in her arms, instantly laid it on the floor, imploring the mercy of God. Next came the mother, also crying, 'Oh! Lord—mercy, mercy for myself and children.' The father also drew nigh, took the child up, to prevent its being hurt in the group, and stood alongside of his children and wife, with tears streaming down his furrowed cheeks. O, what a sight! The scene could not be beheld without emotion. The whole congregation began to cry and moan; the excitement became general. Presently one fell here, another there; a woman hanging on the bosom of her beloved companion; a daughter in the arms of her distressed mother: all crying for mercy. Never before have I witnessed the power of God in so great a degree, among so many people. We commenced singing and praying; and, glory be to God,

many distressed souls found peace, and pardon of their sins, in the blood of the Lamb. The meeting was protracted till late at night. I went home with Mr. and Mrs. Meyer, a godly, pious pair; they entertained me very friendly.

"21st.—This day the congregation was still more numerous than the day before. Brother Guething spoke first, with great power, from 1 Cor. i.; v. 23, 24: I followed him. The power of God was again signally displayed, the love of Jesus shed abroad, and united all hearts in the bonds of brotherly love. At the administration of the sacrament, you could perceive all distinction of sects lost in Christian love and fellowship. Lutherans, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Baptists, and Methodists, all drew near the Lord's table, and united in commemoration of the dying love of the Redeemer. Many were not able to avoid shouting and praising God for his unbounded mercy and goodness. With difficulty, we parted from the people, but we were compelled to leave them, in order to fill our appointment at Mr. Hivener's, about ten miles distant."

"Nineteen great meetings were held dur-

ing this year. The times selected for holding these meetings, were the months of May, June, August, September, and October. The holding of these meetings formed, as we have already seen, another link in the chain of reformation. It was a new measure, but one which was productive of much good, and resulted in the best of consequences. They afforded an enlarged field of action, and a wider spread of the knowledge of true religion; and a fit opportunity to enforce the practice of its moral precepts. Hundreds, and we may say thousands, by these means, came to hear, who, in the ordinary way of holding religious or divine worship, would not have been brought under the saving influence of this dispensation of life. Prejudices which had taken possession of the minds of many, accompanied by a sectarian spirit, were thereby more or less removed or shorn of their strength, and the best of all was, many experienced a change of heart. On the Sabbath day, the concourse of people was frequently such as to render the administration of the holy sacrament on that day impracticable. When this was the case, the love-feast and the sacrament were held



on Monday. Those love-feasts in the early days of the rise of the church, were peculiar to the time, and characteristic of the progress of a glorious reformation, wrought by HIM who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and who said, 'Behold I have set before thee an open door.' The distinctive divisions, which embraced the German population and churches, (as stated elsewhere) consisting of Lutheran, German Reformed, Mennonite, and Tunkers, had, previously, and at this very period, little or no Christian fellowship or communion with each other as churches. But here at these meetings they were seen and found worshipping God together, from the four divisions. We say in those love-feasts, the Tunker, the Mennonite, and the high-churchman, were seen to rise alternately, and tell their Christian experience. Men whose heads had become silvered by age, with the middle-aged and the youth, testified, for the first time, that God had bestowed upon them his mercy, and had pardoned their sins. The simplicity, the earnestness, with which this testimony was delivered, could not fail to carry conviction with it. These witnesses showed how hard it was to give up all, in the midst

of persecution, the derision of friends, and false comforts of pastors, and to persevere in faith and prayer, until the blessing came. Two or three cases we will state in words nearly, and we might say, word for word, as they passed.

"One arose and said, 'I was brought up in the church, I was catechised and confirmed, have been a member of the church for twenty years, and yet, now only do I know, by experience, the realities of religion.'

"Another said, 'I was raised a Mennonite, —was received into that society in my eighteenth year. I am now forty years old. I led a moral life, and was frequently told by my teachers, all was safe. But, six months ago, I found myself a poor lost sinner. Oh! I saw myself a great sinner, condemned by the word of God and the tribunal of my own conscience. My distress was great, but God has had mercy upon me, and blessed me. Christ died for me. I love the Lord, I love his people. Oh! come, you are all my brethren,—you Reformed, you Lutherans, you my Mennonite brethren, who have not yet experienced the love of God. I was like you; you know it: oh! come, seek Jesus.'

"And yet another arose tremblingly, and the tears were rolling down his face. 'Brethren, I came fifty miles to this meeting. I was raised in the church. I was catechised, and was praised for learning the questions and answers so well. I was confirmed, partook of the holy sacrament, was a member in the church, attended preaching faithfully, and paid the preachers. I was considered, by my neighbors and friends, a good Christian, although they knew I sometimes used profane language, with other conduct unbecoming a Christian. Some of the preachers who are now on the stand, came and preached in my neighborhood. I would not go to hear them myself. The man who invited them to his house to preach, had been a particular friend of mine until he had preaching at his house. He tried to reason with me, but I would listen to no reason. I said to him, you and I have been confirmed together, and are members of one church, what do you want with preaching at your house? Is the preaching we have not sufficient? I hope you are not going to forsake the religion of your forefathers. What do you mean by saying we must be converted, and



pray to be saved? This is a new religion; I want none of it. Why should *I pray*? The preacher prays for me, and I pay him for it. I was angry, and left him.

“But it so happened that some of my family went to hear the Brethren preach. One evening, news was brought me, that my son was praying for mercy. Now, my wrath, for a time, knew no bounds; but I hoped I could soon cure him of it. I invited our preacher to visit us, believing he would soon talk my son out of his praying notions. But he referred the preacher to the Bible, and the promise he had made in confirmation, which he had not kept, and could not keep, except God would give him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him. The preacher became thoughtful, and left; I followed him out to the gate. Well, what do you say of my son? ‘Oh, it is best not to talk with him about religion at this time. He had better not read much in the Bible or Testament. Give him money, and keep him out of the way of those preachings and prayer-meetings,’ &c., &c. But my son continued praying, and I kept my wrath. I now began to hate my neighbor, and wished those

preachers and all of them were dead. I cursed them in my heart. Some time after this, the word was circulated that a big meeting was to be held at my neighbor Miller's. We were cautioned, from the pulpit, not to go near it, nor to hear, lest the false prophets which should come in the last time, might deceive us, and I resolved not to go. But when the time for the meeting came, on Sabbath morning, I thought I might safely go and hear a false prophet, for I had never heard one preach. I determined to be on my guard, and to keep just in hearing distance. When I first saw the preachers on the stand, my anger was somewhat raised against them. After preaching, however, I felt calm, and addressed a friend, saying, why, these men are like other men, only they would make one feel like a guilty sinner in the course of their preaching.

"Monday morning, from a mere desire to see the end of this meeting, I went again; and, when one, and then another, rose up to tell their experience, I was surprised to hear men and women stand up in the congregation, and speak and talk about Jesus. But while some were telling

how they had sinned against God, how they had been awakened and alarmed, how they had wept and mourned, and how the Lord had blessed them, and how they hoped to meet their Christian friends in heaven, this cut me to the heart. I went home, and what I had heard and seen in that meeting followed me night and day. Mourn and pray—meet friends in heaven—can I say so? No. Next day, when my wife looked at me, I thought she said to me, ‘In heaven!’ my son, too, I thought, said, ‘In heaven!’ and the wind, which blew sharply that day, seemed to whisper, ‘In heaven!’ My peace was gone; I saw and felt that I was a great sinner; and what to do, I knew not, or I did not want to know. I consulted our preacher again, and all the comfort which I received from him was, ‘You had no business at that meeting, you were cautioned not to go, and now if you be foolish enough to make shipwreck of your faith,’ (which, however, he hoped I would not do) ‘I have cleared my skirts of your blood. You and those preachers may see to it.’

“‘But, said I, if the half is true of what I heard at that meeting, then I have no



religion; my own heart condemns me. But you are our preacher, and you should know best.

“‘He replied, ‘You have a religion, and you promised to live and die in this faith and this religion; what do you want with another religion?’

“‘I ‘don’t want another religion; I asked you, Mr. Pastor, (*Herr Pfarrer*) what I should do; I am a sinner, and feel condemned. Many at the meeting said they had experienced great distress of mind, but God had blessed them, pardoned their sins, and they were happy; but I am unhappy—miserable. Tell me, am I in no danger? am I not lost?

“‘He gave a deep sigh, but said, ‘We are all poor sinners in this world.’

“‘I felt a desire to open the Bible, and the first verse I read was, ‘Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ Light sprang up in my mind, fear vanished; I felt, and now feel, joy and peace in my Redeemer.’

“Many others related their Christian experience in few words; but the shortest was both interesting and instructive. In the administration of the sacrament, distinc-

tion of sects and churches appeared, for the time, to be lost in Christian fellowship and love; and, as one, they were seen approaching the Lord's table as sons and daughters of one Father—even our Father in heaven, and celebrating the dying love of Jesus Christ, the glorious Redeemer.

"These meetings, however long they have been in use in the church, have not lost in interest and vitality to this day. They have been most signally owned and blessed as a means of grace, by the great Head of the church; and there is no doubt but that there are many in heaven who have dated their conviction and conversion to them."\*

"Oh! great is Jehovah, and great be his praise,  
In the city of God he is King;  
Proclaim ye, his ransomed, in heavenly strains,  
On the mount of his holiness sing.

The joy of the earth, from her beautiful hight,  
Is Zion's most glorious hill;  
The Lord in her temple still taketh delight,  
God reigns in her palaces still.

Let the daughters of Judah be glad for thy love,  
The mountain of Zion rejoice,  
For thou wilt establish her seat from above,  
Wilt make her the theme of thy choice.

Then say to your children—Our refuge is tried,  
This God is our God to the end;  
His people forever his counsels shall guide,  
His arm shall forever defend.

MONTGOMERY.

\* Spayth, pp. 88—95.

## CHAPTER XIII.

CONFERENCES OF 1803-4. — PENTECOSTAL  
MEETINGS—THE BENEFITS.

IN the year 1803, on the 5th of October, the annual conference assembled at David Snyder's, in Cumberland county, Pa. The following members were present:—Otterbein, Boehm, Newcomer, Snyder, John Hershey, Kemp, Mayer, Grosh, Christian Crum, Valentine Flugel, John Winter, Schaffer, Guething, and George Benedum.

"The conference was opened"—we quote the secretary's devout record—"by reading 1st Timothy, 2d chapter, singing and prayer, that our Lord and Savior may bless our assembling together, and that it may be to the honor of his name and our edification. O Lord! hear us, for Christ's sake. Amen." These minutes were probably written by Guething, as they were signed by Otterbein, Boehm, and Guething, and they bear the marks of a devout and spiritual mind.



The preachers were all examined, and their official character and usefulness inquired into particularly. Some of the resolutions at this conference will be interesting to the reader. We insert a liberal translation of them from the original German.\*

"Resolved, That Daniel Strickler and Christian Crum call a meeting of the preachers in Virginia, to arrange their fields of labor. May God grant them wisdom and strength from above.

"Resolved, That the supplying of the fields of labor in Maryland be left to the preachers of Maryland.

"Resolved, That Martin Boehm and Christian Grosh be a committee to station the preachers in Pennsylvania.

"Resolved, That David Snyder, Abraham Mayer, and George Benedum, make their own arrangements in regard to their preaching places. May the Lord assist them. Amen.

"Resolved, That Christian Newcomer and Henry Crum unite with Christian Berger, to travel through the portion of country where he resides.

"Resolved, That those two brethren give

\* Translation by Rev. J. Degmeier.

authority to Christian Berger to baptize, but nothing further at present.

"Resolved, That, after preaching, the preachers shall spend a short time with the awakened souls of their congregations."

These resolutions show that the work had extended so far that it was not practicable for the conference in Pennsylvania to arrange the work for the preachers in Maryland and Virginia; hence, the permission given those preachers to meet in separate conferences for this single purpose.

The resolution requiring the preachers to hold class-meetings or religious conferences with awakened souls, after preaching, is suggestive of the fact that those early ministers seldom preached a sermon which was not made the power of God unto the salvation of some souls. Conversions occurred continually at ordinary appointments; and sometimes eight or ten, or more, were awakened and redeemed at a single meeting.

The religious services, during this conference, were highly interesting. The first sermon was preached by Christian Grosh, from John iii., 1, on the first evening of the session. In the forenoon of the second day, a sermon, of remarkable power, was preached

by Otterbein. He was followed by Boehm. After a session of three days, conference adjourned.

"On the 8th, a meeting commenced at Brother Shopp's. Father Boehm opened the meeting, and preached with great power. The word reached the heart; many were deeply affected. The slain of the Lord were found lying in every direction, lamenting and crying aloud for mercy. Many obtained peace with God in the pardon of their sins.

"Love-feast held on Sabbath morning. The brethren and sisters spoke very feelingly, and with great liberty, of the dealings and mercies of God. It was a refreshing season. Father Otterbein preached with great power and energy. The grace of God wrought powerfully among the people. A man fell suddenly to the ground, and cried for mercy; others were so affected, that they were unable to move from where they were sitting or standing; and, at the close of the meeting, some had to be led, and some carried away."

"A gracious revival of religion took place this year, 1803, west of the Allegheny mountains, in what is called the Glades,



also in Westmoreland and Washington counties, under the preaching of Brother J. G. Pfrimmer and Christian Berger. Brother C. Newcomer, who visited those parts that year, writes under date of November 10th:—

“‘Preached at John Bonnet’s. I had not spoken long, before some of my hearers fell to the floor; others stood trembling, and cried so loud that my voice could not well be heard.

“‘On the 11th, we had meeting at Schwope’s, and here the power of God was displayed in a most marvelous manner. The whole congregation was moved, and seemed to wave like corn before a mighty wind. Lamentation and mourning were very general. Many were the wounded and slain. Some of the most stubborn sinners fell instantly before the power of God. The meeting continued the whole night, and some were enabled to rejoice in the pardoning love of God.

“‘On Sunday, we had a Pentecost. From three to four hundred persons had collected; more than the barn, in which we had assembled for worship, would contain. The congregation was remarkably at-

tentive to the word. Though it rained, those that had no shelter in the barn kept their stand in the rain. During the time of preaching, the exhibition of God's power for the salvation of the people was seen and felt. Many fell from their seats; some laid as if they were dead. The weeping, and crying, and praying, came from all parts of the congregation.' "\*

Remarking upon the meeting at Schwopé's, Mr. Spayth says: "From the time of this meeting, twenty years had passed away, when the writer had the happiness to become acquainted with brethren and sisters who, at that meeting, had espoused the cause of religion, and who were still faithful servants of the Lord. Some of these have I met in the far west, to which they had emigrated, and where they had raised the standard of the cross. And though years had fled away since that blessed period in their life, and being now far distant from the place where God had first spoken peace to their then troubled souls, their memory still lingered with delight around that happy scene. And more than this, we have seen some of them spend

\* Newcomer's Journal.

their last hour on earth, heard their last prayer, and have seen them die in peace.

"What are the benefits and advantages which we may expect to reap from religious meetings, distinguished and marked by such effects upon the assembled multitude, through the preaching of the Gospel and the agency of the Holy Ghost, as we have just witnessed? We put the question again, and ask—and all who will may ask—with serious and candid reflections, what are the benefits, the advantages, the results? Let those most competent to judge, answer. Let those who have been the immediate subjects of this excitement, of this divine power, *answer*. Let those who have been benefited by the conversion of others, *answer*. Let the illustrious trophies of the blessed Gospel, in the hands of an itinerant ministry, *answer*. Let prayer-meetings, class-meetings, and love-feast-meetings, *answer*; above all, let the word of God, the song of the redeemed in heaven, and the fruitless remorse of lost souls, *answer*!

"In view of this momentous and sublime subject, few, indeed, if any, will be found, who will be so suicidal as to desire a church that is silent or rejects this part



of the economy of grace, and whose ministration is performed, year in and year out, in the absence of sinners trembling because of sin, mourners weeping, and crying to God for mercy and pardon, and where the shout of the blessed of the Lord is never heard within her walls.

“That the Brethren church has been identified with a blessed work of grace, from the reception of the first ray of Gospel light, which she was permitted to reflect, and which has, from that period to the present day, continued to shine around her with increasing strength, her present position amply sustains; and, in a retrospect of the past, will be equally sustained by the best of testimony. From Newcomer’s Journal, dated Glades, Somerset county, Pa., Nov. 19th, 1803, we will make some extracts which come in place here:

“‘Preached this day at Michael Sterner’s, to a numerous congregation. Rode to Zug’s, followed by many of the persons whom we had addressed at Sterner’s. Here we met with a still larger congregation. I gave an exhortation; the hearts of the hearers were immediately touched; all, young and old, began to cry and pray. A

man fell to the floor, and lay a considerable time as if lifeless. Sunday, 20th.—This forenoon, the meeting was very dull. Addressed the audience from 1 Peter i.: 3, 4, 5. Brother C. Crum spoke also, and it pleased God to accompany the word with power, and many cried aloud for mercy. We dismissed the people, but they had no desire to depart. I addressed them again. We met again at candle-light, and the presence of the Lord continued with us. On every side the people fell to the floor. Among these was a youth of about thirteen years of age. Some were struck with awe, others flew into a passion, taking hold of their friends and carrying them out of the house, saying this was the work of the Devil. I endeavored to persuade them, with meekness, to let the distressed alone, to have a little patience, that God would bless their friends, and restore them to consciousness again; adding, if it is the work of the Devil, or the powers of darkness, your friends will curse when they revive; and if the work is of God, they will pray and praise the Lord. They had carried the youth up stairs, and there laid him on a bed, watching him with great anxiety.

When he came to himself, he began to praise the Lord, and exhorted all around him in so wonderful a manner, that a number of them came in distress, confessing, with tears, that they had sinned against God, and saying, 'What shall we do to be saved?' They sent for me to come and pray for them, for, said they, 'We are lost and undone forever.' And some of these also obtained mercy and pardon; and now they again, in turn, exhorted their friends to fly to the outstretched arms of sovereign mercy.'

"This year, conference was appointed to meet at the house of Brother David Snyder, Cumberland county, Pa., October 3d, 1804. But an epidemic prevailing to a great extent (such as had not been known) in Maryland, and in the vicinity where the conference was to sit, but five brethren came to attend, to-wit:—Martin Boehm, Frederick Schaffer, C. Newcomer, Abraham Mayer, and Matthias Bortsfield. The brethren thus met, examined the letters sent into the conference, and, no more brethren arriving, adjourned the meeting, after resolving that the next annual conference should be held at Brother Jacob Baulus', near Mid-



dletown, Maryland, on the Wednesday before White-Sunday, 1805.

"May 19th, a sacramental meeting commenced at the Antietam, (G. A. Guething's house) at which Father Otterbein was present, and preached on Saturday, from Isa. li.: 7, 8. On the Sabbath, Father Otterbein preached again, from Psalms lxxii., with his usual energy, perspicuity, unction, and power. Under preaching, and at the communion-table, tears of sorrow and of joy flowed abundantly, and the wells of salvation furnished a rich supply.

"Doctor Senseny, of Winchester, Virginia, died this year. Brother Senseny had been an early member of the Brethren church, and for some years, and up to the time of his death, an acceptable and useful preacher. His business was the medical profession, in which he was very successful, possessing much skill and talent for usefulness in that department. In his attendance on the sick, he had made it his constant practice to say a word to the patient, of Jesus, the great Physician of souls, and often was seen to kneel at the bedside of the sick, and pray fervently. His exemplary life, his humility, his love and kindness, his piety, and charity

to the poor, secured to him the respect, esteem, and love, of all who came within the sphere of his acquaintance. His last illness was very brief. He had but a few days' notice of his approaching death. Surrounded by a dearly-beloved family—wife, and sons, and daughters,—and dear brethren in the church, and wealth, and friends, he met this sudden call of his divine Master with Christian resignation, and was enabled to leave this world with joy and peace, saying, 'Lord Jesus, I come!'"\*

\* Spayth, pp. 98—104.

## CHAPTER XIV.

A GLANCE AT THE CONFERENCES, FROM 1805  
TO 1812.—FIRST CONFERENCE IN OHIO.

ON the 29th of May, 1805, conference convened at Jacob Baulus', in Frederick county, Maryland. Twenty-one preachers were in attendance. The minutes say:—"The preachers resolved, by the grace of God, to engage, with more earnestness than ever before, in the work of the Lord. Oh, Lord, help thou us, thy poor and unworthy servants, for thy name's sake."

Otterbein and Boehm were re-elected superintendents or bishops. This election would have been held at the conference of the preceding year, had not the prevalent sickness, noticed in a previous chapter, prevented a full attendance of the members of conference. It is evident from this that the brethren intended, from the first, that the election of superintendents should, providence favoring, occur quadrennially.



It was arranged, as we learn from the minutes, that Newcomer should travel the following year, through Maryland and a portion of Pennsylvania, and that Christian Crum should travel through Virginia; and it was agreed that each of these brethren should receive, for his support, per annum, the pittance of 40 livres. It was resolved that George Adam Guething be present at the great meetings appointed in Maryland, and, also, on the east side of the Susquehannah in Pennsylvania. It was recommended that Hagerstown be regularly visited by the Brethren preachers. One resolution we quote entire:—"Resolved, That the preachers who preach only where they like, or choose, shall receive no compensation for their services, and that it shall be the duty of such preachers to pay over to the conference the money they receive in this way, for the benefit of the traveling preachers." "Permission was granted to Brother Duckwald and Christian Berger to baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, and to solemnize marriages." All the business which came before the conference was attended to with perfect harmony of feeling. This was the last conference attended by Otterbein.

He had now attained his seventy-ninth year, and Boehm his eightieth. More than forty years before, these faithful servants of God had met, in the prime of life, at the great meeting at Isaac Long's, and had embraced each other as brethren, and from that period up to the conference at Jacob Baulus', as often as once a year, they had been associated together, at conferences, or at great meetings, or at both, to preach, exhort, and to counsel in regard to the work of reformation among the people. Together they had witnessed the most astonishing displays of the grace and power of God. A faithful body of co-laborers had been raised up around them. The good seed had been sown in nearly all those portions of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, where the German language was spoken; and, also, in the new settlements west of the Alleghanies; and it was producing an abundant harvest. Now, for the last time, these two venerable evangelists have sat together in the conference of their brethren; and, for the last time, their trembling signatures are recorded, side by side, on the conference minutes.

The conference of 1806 was held at Bro.

Eberhart's, in Frederick county, Md. It convened on the 21st, and adjourned on the 24th of May.

The question was asked at this conference, "Are all the preachers united in love?" The answer given is worthy of record:—"We are," said they, "not only united among ourselves, *but we also love all our fellow-men, whoever they may be.*" Joseph Hoffman and Christian Crum were appointed to travel the ensuing year; a letter was written to the brethren in Pennsylvania; the next conference was appointed to be held in Pennsylvania; great meetings were announced in various portions of the work, and brethren appointed to take charge of them.

In 1807, the conference met in Pennsylvania, at Christian Herre's. Martin Boehm presided. The session was short, and, as usual, peaceful. Work was laid out, at this conference, for Abraham Niswander, Christian Smith, David Snyder, Abraham Mayer, John Hershey, Frederick Schaffer, John Neiding, Joseph Hoffman, and Christian Newcomer; and authority was given Isaac Niswander and Abraham Mayer to admin-



ister all the ordinances of the house of God.

The conference of 1808 met in Virginia, May 25th, at Abraham Niswander's. The following ministers were in attendance:—Christian Newcomer, Joseph Hoffman, David Snyder, Isaac Niswander, Peter Kemp, William Ambrose, Ludwig Duckwald, Christian Crum, Frederick Duckwald, Abraham Mayer, Jacob Baulus, John Hershey, Geo. Adam Guething, and George Hoffman.

After an examination of the moral and official character of the preachers, little appears to have been done, except to arrange the labor for the ensuing year. It was—"Resolved, That those who desire to receive license to preach among us, shall be examined at a great meeting; and, if favorably reported, two of the elders shall grant them license for one year, at the end of which time they shall appear before the conference, for examination. In case they can not appear at the conference, their license may be renewed at a great meeting."

Again the conference convened at Christian Herre's, in Lancaster county, Pa., May 10th, 1809. The members present were—Martin Boehm, Christian Newcomer, Abra-

ham Mayer, Adam Reigel, Isaac Niswander, Frederick Schaffer, Christian Smith, John Hershey, Matthias Bortsfield, Joseph Hoffman, Abraham Hershey, George Benedum, George Adam Guething, David Long, Christopher Grosh, Christian Hershey, David Snyder, and John Snyder. The subject of a union or co-operation with the Methodists, occupied much of the time.

Conference met June 6th, 1810, in Frederick county, Md., at the house of John Cronise. Sixteen preachers were present; and letters were read from Otterbein, L. and F. Duckwald, F. Schaffer, and other absent brethren. The church at Baltimore had had the subject of a closer union with the Methodists under consideration, and sent a letter to the conference in relation thereto. Provision was made at this conference for a more careful superintendence of the circuits. The elder preachers were required to visit all the appointments, on all the fields of labor, twice during the year, if at all practicable.

A letter, from the Methodist conference, was received, considered, and answered, in a fraternal spirit.

On the 13th of July, 1787, the Conti-

mental Congress, sitting in New York, adopted An Ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States *north-west of the Ohio*, which concludes with "six unalterable articles of perpetual compact," the last of which declares that "there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in punishment for crimes, whereof the parties shall be duly convicted."

The year following the adoption of this ordinance, the first permanent settlement was made in Ohio, at Marietta. In 1789, another settlement was made six miles below Cincinnati; and, in 1796, some New Englanders established themselves at Cleveland. In 1802, Ohio formed a constitution, and was admitted into the Union. The mighty march of emigration, which, in half a century, has resulted in the establishment, in the north-west, of a mighty empire, was now fairly commenced.

As early as 1803, some United Brethren, seeking homes for themselves and their children, penetrated into the forests of Ohio. Their first settlements appear to have been made in the Miami Valley, near German-town and Dayton. A society, and, probably,



the *first* United Brethren society in the State, was organized at A. Zeller's, near Germantown, in 1806. During that year, some persons were converted at Mr. Zeller's house, who are still living, and who, for more than fifty years, have been following on to know the Lord. Among the first preachers who emigrated to the Miami Valley, we find the names of Andrew Zeller—afterward a bishop of the church, Daniel Troyer—still alive, and bending under the weight of almost ninety years, and Thomas Winter—now a member of the Reformed church.

About the time that the Zeller, Kemp, Troyer, Sowers, and other Brethren families, settled in the Miami country, some preachers and members of the church emigrated to that rich and beautiful portion of the State which lies between Zanesville and Chillicothe. Among the preachers associated with the rise of the United Brethren in that part of the State, we find the names of Geo. Benedum, Abraham Heistand, and Dewalt Mechlin.

These early preachers found, in the new and rapidly-improving State, many open doors. The calls for preachers were numer-

ous, the labor required severe, and the compensation exceedingly small.

The distance to the conference in the east was so great, however, that the brethren in the west could not attend it; and it became necessary, therefore, to organize a conference in Ohio. The conference in the east, having received communications from the west upon the subject, authorized Christian Newcomer to make a visit to the west, and to hold a conference. Accordingly, the FIRST CONFERENCE IN THE WEST met at Brother MICHAEL CRIDER's, in Ross County, Ohio, and was organized on the 13th of August, 1810. Fifteen preachers were present. Unfortunately, the records of the early conferences in Ohio have been lost; but, from brief notices of them in Newcomer's journal, as well as from the statements of some aged men still living, who attended those conferences, we learn that the Spirit of the Lord was with the Brethren, in their western homes, and worked mightily among them and by them. The conference in the west soon became a very influential portion of the church. The calls for preaching, in every direction, were numerous; societies were rapidly multiplied, and many preachers were

raised up to aid those who had emigrated from the east. After 1810, conferences were held regularly in Ohio. The rise and progress of the church in the west, however, will come more particularly under our notice in a subsequent volume of this history.

The conference of 1811 met, May 23d, in Cumberland county, Pa. Twenty ministers were present, a number of whom were new members. Letters were received from absent brethren in Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio. The salary of a single preacher was fixed at \$80 a year.

The conference convened at Antietam, May 13th, 1812. Twenty members were in attendance. Their names follow:—Christian Newcomer, Christian Crum, George A. Guething, Abraham Draksel, Abraham Mayer, Joseph Hoffman, Christian Smith, Isaac Niswander, David Snyder, Valentine Baulus, Jacob Baulus, Abraham Hershey, Lorenzo Eberhart, M. Thomas, Jacob Clymer, Christian Berger, Henry Heistand, Henry G. Spayth, Martin Crider, and Jacob Dehoff.

The examination of the members was attended to in a brotherly manner, and "the presence of the Lord was felt," says the



secretary. He adds: "Thanks be to God through all eternity." The minutes of this conference were the last penned by the devout and holy Guething. His record begins with—"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth! Do it, Lord Jesus, for thy own sake! Amen." And now, before laying down his pen, he writes: "Thanks be to God through all eternity!"

July 30th and October 29th were appointed as days of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving, to be observed throughout the church. The work was placed under the care of superintendents or elders, who were assigned their districts, and were authorized to hold small conferences on the circuits, whenever necessary. It was determined that preaching be given by the itinerant preachers, at all the appointments, once in four weeks. The salary of a single preacher was fixed at \$80 per annum; that of a traveling preacher, at \$160, and traveling expenses. Henry Heistand and Henry G. Spayth were added to the itinerant list. Christian Newcomer was authorized to visit the brethren in Ohio, and to hold a conference there. "Lord give him grace," says the secretary.

Delegates were present at this conference with letters from the Baltimore and Philadelphia conferences of the M. E. church. They were kindly received; and it was "unanimously resolved that friendship and love shall be maintained between the two churches," and corresponding delegates were appointed.

The minutes give a list of all the ministers of the United Brethren in Christ who, at that time, were "authorized to administer all the ordinances of the house of God." Their names follow:—William Otterbein, G. A. Guething, Christian Newcomer, Christian Crum, John Hershey, Christopher Grosh, Abraham Draksel, L. Duckwald, John Neiding, David Long, Abraham Hershey, Christian Hershey, Abraham Mayer, William Ambrose, Isaac Niswander, D. Troyer, Geo. Benedum, Peter Kemp, Adam Reigle, Frederick Schaffer, Joseph Hoffman, David Gingerich, Christian Berger, David Snyder, and Christian Smith.

The faithful secretary closes up his long record with this prayer: "Oh! Lord God Almighty, bless thy work; grant thy Holy Spirit to all thy servants who preach thy truth; fill them with pure love, with zeal

and wisdom; may they walk uprightly before thee, and honor thee in all their ways." A few days hence, and Guething was called home.



## CHAPTER XV.

## THE FRIENDLY CORRESPONDENCE.

THE amicable relations and friendly correspondence which existed between the United Brethren in Christ and the Methodist Episcopal Church, have been frequently alluded to in the preceding pages; and, as it is a subject pleasing to dwell upon, honorable to both churches, and illustrative of the spirit of fraternal love and union which pervades all genuine revivals of true religion, we will devote a chapter to the subject.

The welcome which the first Methodist itinerants received from United Brethren ministers and people, on the commencement of their labors in this country, has been already noticed; as also the warm friendship and fellowship which existed between Otterbein and Asbury. The spirit of these leaders animated both societies. A few facts, showing the spirit manifested in those times, must be placed upon record.

In 1799, Newcomer was on a preaching tour in Virginia, in company with Brother Strickler. He makes this note in his journal:—"In Rockingham, we visited Brother Welsh, a Methodist preacher, and a most excellent man. He was delighted because of our visit. See how the love of God unites the hearts of his children."

Two years later, while traveling in the same state, Mr. Newcomer says:—"In Hagars-town, I met bishop Whatcoat. He communicated to me the glad tidings, that, at different places in America, powerful revivals of religion had taken place. 'And yet,' he added, 'I hope this is only the beginning;' to which I responded a hearty Amen."

On the 20th of October, 1801, Mr. Newcomer makes this note:—"This day I held a meeting at John Miller's. Here I met Nicholas Sneithen, a Methodist brother, lately from Delaware. He related to me glorious and wonderful news. It appears that the people are turning to the Lord by multitudes. The number of mourners, and such as are seeking salvation, are so great, that the preachers are worn down, through preaching and praying day and night. More than a thousand persons, some

of them the wealthiest and most respectable part of society, have joined themselves to the Methodists. Unto God be all the glory." A few days after this, Otterbein and Newcomer, and Enoch George and Quinn, are found preaching, interchangeably, at Winchester, Va.

April 3d, 1803, Mr. Roberts, afterward bishop, preached in Otterbein's pulpit, in Baltimore. In the afternoon of the same day it was filled by Nicholas Sneithen. "This," says Newcomer, "was a blessed day to my soul." On the following day, Mr. Newcomer was invited to dine with a Methodist family. "The brother conducted me to his carriage, where I found his companion already seated. Both of them related to me, immediately, with childlike simplicity, what the Lord had done for their souls. I could not but love them with all my heart. We alighted at an elegant house, splendidly furnished. Every thing around it proclaimed its owner to be a man of wealth and distinction; and yet I found them to be true disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus. I was truly happy in their society."

On a Sabbath in May, 1804, Ezekiel



Cooper and Mr. Roberts preached in Otterbein's church, and, on the following day, Mr. Newcomer says:—"Otterbein, Roberts, Wells, and myself, dined together at Philip Greybill's. After dinner, we praised the Lord together, on our knees, for his manifold mercies."

At the great meetings, and especially at the camp-meetings, the spirit of Christian union was exhibited. Often did the brethren and preachers of both societies go up to the help of the Lord together. At a great camp-meeting in Pennsylvania, for example, in 1805, the Methodist ministers present were—Gruber, Ower, Cassel, Birch, Emmet, Steel, and Wells; the Brethren—Neiding, Newcomer, Snyder, Fordenbach, and Benedum. They all labored together, as if members of one church. "At this meeting, a great number," says Newcomer, "were happily converted to God."

In Mr. Newcomer's journal of this period and a number of succeeding years, we have constant notes like this:—"Brother Hershey spoke first, and Brother Strawbridge, a Methodist brother, followed." "Brother Young, a Methodist brother, followed me in the English." "At a sacramental meet-

ing, at John Huber's, Brother Hoffman and Enoch George were present. We had a blessed time."

As early as 1803, the subject of a closer union between the two societies was broached in Baltimore, and, from that time onward, was a matter of frequent conversation and prayer at the large meetings, and on other occasions.

February the 12th, 1809, Mr. Newcomer makes this note in his journal:—"Brother Enoch George and myself lodged at Bro. G. Hoffman's. 13th.—We rode together to Brother Guething's, where we held a long conversation respecting a closer union between the English and German Brethren. After commending each other to the guidance and protection of God, we parted."

As a result of the conference at Guething's, Mr. Newcomer attended, in March following, the Methodist annual conference for the Baltimore district, which met that year in Harrisonburg, Rockingham county, Va. At this conference, a committee of five elders was appointed to confer with Brother Newcomer, and "ascertain whether any, and, if any, what union could be effected between the Methodist Episcopal church and the

United Brethren in Christ." On the 7th of April, this committee met. Of this meeting, Mr. Newcomer makes this note:—"We first entreated a throne of grace, for wisdom from above, and the blessing of the Most High, on the business about to be transacted. I am persuaded that all of us were seriously concerned, and had nothing else in view but the salvation of immortal souls, the furtherance of the good cause of our Lord and Master, in spreading his kingdom through our blessed country. We discussed many and different subjects, which I do not intend here to relate. Our transactions were concluded with prayer. The committee made their report to the conference. In the afternoon, I was invited to attend the session of the conference. The members, including the two bishops, numbered about sixty. After mature deliberation and discussion on their part, I received, from the conference, a letter, which I was to deliver to William Otterbein, in Baltimore. And it was further resolved, that a member of their body should be appointed to attend our next annual conference, as a delegate. Upon the reception of the letter by the United Brethren conference at Christian Herre's, a res-



olution was adopted by the conference, to give a brotherly answer to the letter, and, in the fraternal spirit of the Gospel, to open a correspondence upon the subject introduced. This letter was laid before the next Methodist conference, which convened in Baltimore in 1810. This correspondence and interchange of delegates continued for some years. The Philadelphia conference of the M. E. church also participated; and, eventually, a plan of harmonious action, in several particulars, was settled upon.

This treaty, if we may so style it, of amity and friendship, rested upon the conviction that societies, which were agreed in all the essential truths of our holy religion—which were alike in faith, experience, and practice, and which sustained a living itinerant ministry, should have some bond of union—some fraternal relations—other than those which had hitherto existed between them.

The terms of this union were few. Each church was left entirely distinct and separate, as before. The most important points related to the use of churches, and to class-meetings and love-feasts. Methodist houses of worship were to be open to United

Brethren, when not occupied by the Methodists; and United Brethren houses, in like manner, to the Methodists, when not occupied by the Brethren. The class-meetings and love-feast meetings were to be open, on both sides, to the members of both societies.

The letters of correspondence which passed between the two churches, have nearly all been preserved, and deserve a place in these pages.

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### THE CORRESPONDENCE.

HARRISONBURG, Va., — 1809.

*To the Conference of the United Brethren in Christ.*

VERY DEAR BRETHREN:

We, the members of the Baltimore conference, being deeply sensible of the great utility of *union* among Christian ministers, as far as circumstances will permit, in carrying on the work of God, and promoting the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, believing that you are friends, and brethren, engaged in the same glorious work with ourselves, have, after mature deliberation, thought proper to offer to you the following terms, in order to establish a closer and more permanent union among us:

1st. We think it advisable, for your own good, and prosperity, that each minister or preacher, who is acknowledged by the United Brethren in Christ, should

receive, from their conference, a regular license, which may introduce them to our pulpits and church privileges, and thereby prevent impositions, as there are many who profess to be in union with you, that are not acknowledged by you. And we would further advise, that you favor each of our presiding elders with a list of the names of those ministers so acknowledged and licensed by you within the bounds of his district, that there may be no difficulties in admitting them to our privileges. And we would further observe, that all our traveling ministers and preachers have their names printed in the minutes of our annual conferences, and our local ministers and preachers have credentials of ordination, or a written license; and we hope that you will admit none to your privileges, calling themselves Methodist preachers, but such as have their names on the minutes, or licensed as above mentioned.

2d. As we have long experienced the utility of a Christian discipline, to prevent immorality among our people, we would earnestly recommend to you to establish a strict discipline among you, which may be a "defense on your glory." Our discipline is printed in your language, and we would recommend it to your consideration, to adopt it, or any part of it, that you in your wisdom may think proper, or any other form that you may judge best. And that under a discipline so established, you make use of every Christian and prudential means to unite your members together in societies among yourselves; by these means, we think, your people will become more spiritual, and your labors be more successful under the blessing of God.



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3d. All those members among you who are united in such societies, or may hereafter be united, may be admitted to the privileges of class-meetings, sacraments, and love-feasts, in our church, provided they have a certificate of their membership, signed by a regularly licensed preacher of your church. And to prevent inconveniences, we wish you to furnish each of our preachers with a list of the names of all such members as may be in the bounds of their respective circuits, that they may know who are your members.

In order further to establish this union, *which we so much desire*, we have given particular instructions to our presiding elders and preachers who have the charge of districts and circuits where the United Brethren in Christ live, to admit your preachers and members, as above specified, to our privileges; and, also, to leave a list of the names of your preachers and members in the bounds of their respective districts or circuits, for their successors, that they may have no difficulties in knowing who you acknowledge as preachers or members.

Thus, dear Brethren, you may see that we sincerely wish to accommodate you as far as we can consistently with the discipline which binds us together as a spiritual people. We think that we have proposed to you such terms of accommodation as will meet your wishes; and, if carried into operation among you, we hope and believe a door will be opened for general usefulness among and with each other. We are persuaded that the great Head of the church will smile on us, and own our labors of love, and we shall be blest in seeing our children converted to God, and

become useful members of that church which they may choose.

And now, dear Brethren, we commend you and your charge to God, praying that the Lord may be with you, and bless you, in your conference, and bless your honest labors to promote his glory and the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world.

We are, dear Brethren, your sincere friends and brethren in Christ.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the conference.

FRANCIS ASBURY.

WILLIAM McKENDREE.

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LANCASTER, Pa., May 10th, 1809.

*To the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

MUCH RESPECTED BRETHREN IN CHRIST :

Being in conference assembled, and after taking into serious consideration all those points concerning a closer union between the United Brethren in Christ and that of the Methodist Episcopal church, as they have been proposed by an epistle from the late Baltimore conference, directed to us, as also, verbally, by two of your ministers, namely, James Hunter and James Smith, it does appear that the fundamental Christian doctrine, as held by both societies, is the same, the only difference existing between the two being in relation to some external church regulations.

Truly, it is to be lamented, that, not only in these latter days, but throughout the past centuries, by the setting up and obtruding of opinions, immense harm has been done; yet our conference does not mean, by

this animadversion, to hint as though umbrage was taken, in view of your late epistle to us, but barely mention it as a matter of reflection. As to the first point proposed, concerning a written license to be given to our preachers, we must here inform you that we had already come to a conclusion as to that matter; but yet, till now, there were some among us who had not received a formally written license, but shall be supplied with them in future; and such as may refuse them, we wish you to look upon not as ministers ordained by us; for we do not intend to receive any professing to belong to your conference, except they have a certificate or license from the same.

This we conceive to be highly necessary, in order to prevent imposition from being practiced upon us.

In relation to the second point, concerning a token to be given to all our members, by our respective preachers, in order that they may find access to the Lord's Supper at protracted meetings, and the like, in your church, as above mentioned, we think it proper, and are perfectly willing to agree, with that order which becomes the Christian.

Concerning the third point, we would say, in respect to such as indulge in an unchristian course of conduct or conversation, that they shall remain deprived of Christian fellowship and communion as long as they remain impenitent and neglect to amend their ways. Thus, if we continue not to do unto others that which we would not wish done unto us, and thus, being guided by the influence of grace divine, we are confident that jars will soon subside, and contention die forever. Any further points to be consid-



ered, will be deferred to the sitting of our next conference. May the God of love deign to unite us still closer in the bonds of peace here, and throughout eternal ages.

Be assured of our sincere love, as fellow-laborers in the cause of Christ.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the conference.

MARTIN BOEHM.

GEORGE A. GUETHING.

CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.

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*To the United Brethren in Christ.*

DEAR BRETHREN:

We hereby acknowledge the receipt of the letter of the conference of the United Brethren, bearing date, May 10th, 1809, and are pleased to observe that you are fully sensible of the propriety of mutual letters of recommendation, both for preachers and members of the two societies, who may wish to participate in each other's privileges. We most earnestly encourage you to persevere in so useful a determination, and give it the fullest effect, as not only the two societies, but the church of Christ, and the cause of God in general, are interested in the detection of imposition among us.

Your determination to postpone the consideration of the subject of discipline until your next conference, makes it improper for us to resume that subject, presuming that you had sufficient reasons for so doing. We should have been highly gratified, if it had been consistent with your circumstances, to have given a final decision on the principles of the union which we proposed, and which we conceive is devoutly to be desired by the two societies. We are thankful to find that the

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spirit of Christian and brotherly love still prevails among you toward us, and do assure you that we reciprocate the affection, and hope never to do to you otherwise than we would have you do to us, and shall continue to receive, with an attention suitable to their importance, any communication which you may deem proper to forward to us.

Wishing you great peace in your own souls, great harmony in your conference, and great success in your ministerial labors,

We remain your brothers and fellow-laborers in the kingdom and patience of Christ.

Signed in the behalf of the conference.

JOSEPH TOY, Sec'y.

The reply of the Brethren is wanting.

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*Address to the United Brethren in Christ.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

Having received your letter, etc., etc., we finally agree with you to give the right hand of fellowship, to preach the Gospel of a crucified Redeemer, and work together in spiritual peace and harmony, to bring lost sinners home to God, through repentance and holiness. And we further agree with you, that our preaching houses of public worship shall be open to all your preachers who have license from you. Likewise, it is our earnest wish that you should open all your public preaching houses to all our preachers that have written license from us. We also inform you that we have regulations upon record, to walk by, to direct our preachers to keep class-meetings, or to form classes at any place they think proper, etc. And, lastly, we give unto you the right hand of fellowship, and assure you that

we shall always, as much as in our power lies, do unto you as we wish you to do unto us. We also crave an interest in your prayers, and assure you that it is our full desire to live in as close a connection with you as the nature of the case will admit, to bear with each other in love, and holding the same principles, and preaching the same doctrines, will not suffer smaller things, and only the shadows of religion, to separate us from each other.

An extract from the journal of 1810.

NICHOLAS SNEITHEN.

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*An Address from the Baltimore Annual Conference, to the United Brethren in Christ.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

We have received your affectionate letter, with hearty thankfulness, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all peace and consolation, has inclined your hearts to unite in the bonds of the Gospel, to walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us.

We consider now, if we have not misunderstood you, that we are fully agreed in respect to the necessity of union, and a mutual endeavor to accomplish it. We have, therefore, directed and instructed all our presiding elders and preachers, whose business it may be to consult with the United Brethren, in their several districts and circuits, about the most expedient form of carrying the proposed union into effect. To our own forms of license and certifications, etc., we presume you can have no objections, as they have been of long use among us. If you have already a fixed form, we shall cheerfully accept it, and



would only advise, that, if you have one yet to fix upon, you may bear in mind whether it will not be proper to be somewhat uniform in the formation of the license for your preachers, and the certificates for your members; but, should you see proper to vary in different places, our brethren are instructed to make no objections on that head, but merely to seek for information, and conform to your usage accordingly.

You will please, then, dear brethren, to accept from us the right hand of fellowship, and our assurances that all our preaching houses shall be open to your licensed preachers, as far as our power and advice may be extended, (for some of our houses may be under the control of trustees) and that our sacraments, love-feasts, and class-meetings, shall be open to your members who apply with such form of certification as you may judge proper, according to our proposals, sent to you from the Harrisonburg conference.

As soon as our presiding elders and preachers return to their respective districts and circuits, we shall consider this union as having fully commenced on our part. But we propose to keep open an intercourse between the two conferences, to improve and perfect the plan, as far as experience may furnish matter of improvement.

We hope to hear from you at our next annual conference; and we invite you to exercise the fullest confidence in us in your correspondence. Having given you this invitation, we take the same liberty. We hope you will not indulge, for a moment, a suspicion that we wish to interfere in your conference and church concerns. There will, constantly, no doubt,

be many in both churches, not disposed to become privileged members; none of our regulations can have any effect upon such. But knowing, as we both do, the imperfections of human nature, we can not help foreseeing that offenses will come between the ministry and members of the two churches, who claim privileges. Now we think that some plan ought to be agreed upon for the settlement of all such difficulties. As nothing can now be done decisively, we beg leave to propose the following plan for consideration.

*First*—If any preacher or member of either church, claiming to be a privileged preacher or member in the other, shall be accused of any thing contrary to Christian prudence, or Christian conduct, by the church in which he may be a privileged preacher or member, the accusation shall be made to the conference or church in which he is in regular membership, who shall try and judge accordingly; but, in cases of this kind, if the difficulty be not settled according to the satisfaction of the conference or church-meeting bringing the accusation, his brethren shall advise and request him to desist from the use of the privileges, and to confine himself to his own proper conference or church.

*Second*.—No preacher or member, who shall have been excluded by one conference or church, shall be received by the other.

*Third*.—As often as may be convenient, a messenger shall be sent with any letter which shall be addressed from one conference to the other, with instructions to explain any difficulties.

We invite our beloved Brother Newcomer to a seat

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in our conference, as your messenger; and he is doubly dear to us as a messenger of such joyful tidings of brotherly love from you. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet" of all the messengers of mercy, love, peace, and good-will.

We have the happiness to inform you that we have enjoyed great harmony and love in our conference; and, by what we can learn of the state of religion at present, we have many tokens of good, and abundance of evidence that God is waiting to be gracious.

Wishing you peace and prosperity in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, we remain your affectionate brethren in the bonds of Christian fellowship.

March 27, 1811.

JOSEPH TOY, Sec'y.

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*An Address from the United Brethren in Christ, to the  
Methodist Episcopal Conference.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN IN CHRIST:

We have received your affectionate letter, bearing date, March 27th, 1811, by our Brothers Borg and Swertzwelder, with much joy and thankfulness, seeing, therein, that the God of love has united your hearts in peace and harmony with us, to unite more and more together in the bonds of the Gospel. We are certain, brethren, if we walk in the light, as children of the light, we shall, ere long, be of one heart and one mind. Seeing, likewise, blessed fruits of our union together, in a measure, already, and the glorious prospect before us, we do not hesitate a moment longer to give you the right hand of Christian fellowship. Again, we have now formed our membership



into classes, as much as possible. However, there are a number yet among us who have not joined with us in this privilege, so long delayed by us: we earnestly hope that you will instruct your traveling preachers to bear with such as much as the order of your church will admit. We would further inform you that we have drawn up some regulations or discipline among us, and shall endeavor, more and more, to put them into effect among ourselves and our members.

Any preacher or private member expelled from your church, will not be received by us to the fellowship of saints in Christ; and we do hope that you will do the same, in relation to those expelled by us, at least, until sufficient reason be found of their repentance and good fruits.

We likewise hope that our mutual friendship and love to each other will be increased yet more and more, and that the intercourse, by letter, and messengers from and to each conference, may be kept up yearly, through which medium difficulties may be readily adjusted, and more especially as such messengers, or communications, will be joyfully received by us, and appreciated in the best possible way.

And, lastly, may the God of all peace and consolation, who has united our hearts together in the Gospel, spread his militant church, by us, from pole to pole; and, finally, when time is no more, make us, one and all, members of his church triumphant, to praise God and the Lamb forever. Remember us before the throne of God, is the earnest prayer of your affectionate brethren, wishing you peace and prosperity in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus

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Christ. We remain your affectionate brethren in the bonds of Christian fellowship.

Signed by order, and in behalf of the conference.

CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.

May 25th, 1811.

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*An Address from the Methodist Episcopal Conference,  
assembled at Leesburgh, to the United Brethren  
in Christ.*

TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED BRETHREN:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell in unity. May the holy leaven leaven the whole lump. We do most cordially and sincerely join with you in praying, that He who has united our hearts in the Gospel, may make us instrumental in assisting to spread his militant church from pole to pole, and, finally, when time is no more, make us, one and all, members of the church triumphant, to praise God and the Lamb forever and ever.

We have the happiness to inform you that we do not recollect when we had so gracious a sitting together. "Our peace surpasseth all understanding, and our joy is unspeakable and full of glory." We taste unspeakable bliss. "The power of the Highest overshadowed us, and the glory of God is in the midst of us." Hallelujah!

We have instructed our preachers to deal very tenderly with those members of your church who have not fully come into our measures of union, as far as the rules and orders of our church will admit, hoping and trusting that you will still do all in your power

to promote and extend the spirit and practice of discipline among them, it being evident that our mutual success depends upon our union, wherever our lines of labor come together.

We agree with you in the advantage of correspondence and an interchange of messengers. Brother Newcomer was received by us, and we have appointed our Brothers Alfred Griffith and John Swertzwelder, as messengers to your next conference, with whom you may consult on any subject relative to the desired object of a final and perfect harmony.

We remain, dear brethren, your affectionate fellow-laborers in the bonds of peace.

NICHOLAS SNEITHEN.

March 26th, 1812.

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*An Address to the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, assembled in Baltimore, from the United Brethren Church.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

The members of the conference of the United Brethren assembled at George Adam Guething's, with the greatest satisfaction, mention the receipt of your address from Leesburgh. Our souls have been truly refreshed, particularly when we received the news of love, uniting our kindred souls. We will adopt the language of the royal Psalmist with you: "'Tis good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity." We do cordially and sincerely pray that Jehovah may make us individually instrumental in spreading his blessed cause, and extending his militant church from the rivers to the ends of the earth. We rejoice with you, that the power of the Lord



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was in your midst; our hearts also burned with love, while consulting on the welfare of Zion.

We are truly thankful for the delicacy and tenderness intimated in your letter, as touching those members of our church that may not, as yet, be divested of certain peculiarities. But we humbly hope that the mists will, ere long, through the effulgence of Gospel day, be dispersed from every mind. We have, in many places, succeeded in forming class-meetings and extending discipline, and, as far as prudence shall dictate, we will pursue.

An interchange of messengers and correspondence will still be deemed a favor. Brothers A. Griffith and J. Swertzwelder were thankfully received by us, with whom we had the happiness to consult on the much-desired subject of permanent peace and harmony.

Brothers G. A. Guething and C. Newcomer were instructed as messengers to you. Finally, brethren, may the God of love and peace unite our hearts and efforts in the indissoluble bonds of Jesus' love, is the prayer of your fellow-laborers in the blessed Gospel of peace.

Signed in behalf, and by consent of the conference.

CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.

Washington co., Md., May 13th, 1812.

The answer to this letter we have not been able to obtain.

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*To the Baltimore Conference of the M. E. Church, to  
be held in the City of Baltimore, March, 1814.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

At this important period, while our national

tranquility is disturbed by the desolations of war, we rejoice to find that there is yet prevailing among you a growing disposition to spread our Redeemer's name among the people of the United States of America.

We received your affectionate address by the hands of your messengers, our beloved brethren, R. Birch and J. W. ———, and cordially unite with you in praying that our united efforts may be more and more successful in extending the victorious kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, brethren, this we believe we will not fail to accomplish, if we lay aside all national prejudices, and betake ourselves to more solemn fasting, humiliation, and prayer; and, in spirit, conversation, and public labors, more ardently endeavor to raise up a people for the Lord God of hosts in the midst of the earth.

Mingled as our hearers and members are throughout this widely-extended country, we are the more convinced that one spiritual interest should exist among us and lead us all on to put forth more powerful exertions to fill the world with the knowledge of our glorious and benevolent God.

We firmly believe with you, brethren, that pure, doctrinal truths, and Gospel discipline, dispel darkness from the mind, and correct the errors of the heart and life, and, through the efficacy of the Spirit, perfect us in the love of God. Endeavoring, as we are, to become united in establishing a real Gospel discipline among our people, we have it in contemplation, soon to have printed and circulated among our members, a system of rules which, though they may appear, in some respects, imperfect, yet may serve for the commencement of a form of government

for our people, which may, in process of time, be improved to such a state of perfection as may be to the benefit and happiness of future generations.

But, as we can not, at present, inform you in this letter, concerning the general form of the discipline we contemplate publishing, the bearers of this letter to your conference, our beloved brethren, Christian Newcomer and Valentine Baulus, will be fully qualified, and shall have power, to give you any information that may be necessary concerning the progress, in the discipline, we shall have made during the labors of the present year.

Desiring to continue a friendly correspondence with you, brethren, we wish you all success in the holy labors of the Gospel, hoping that we shall have an interest in your prayers and good wishes, while at the same time, we assure you, we will endeavor not to fail to pray to the God of all grace for you, and wish you all possible success in the good work of the Lord.

Signed in behalf, and by order of, the conference of the United Brethren in Christ, held in Lancaster county, May 6th, 1813.

CHRISTIAN SMITH, Sec'y.

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*The Philadelphia Conference to the United German Brethren, greeting.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

We have been made acquainted with the friendly correspondence that has taken place between you and the Baltimore conference, tending to a happy union; and being informed by your messenger, Christian Newcomer, that it is your wish to enter into a like



friendly correspondence with us, we, therefore, hasten to inform you that we are willing most cordially to embrace you as brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, and are ready to enter into the strictest union with you that the peculiar circumstances of the two societies will admit of, and have, accordingly, appointed two of our members, William Fox and William Foulks, to meet you at your next conference, to aid in the accomplishment of this desired object.

It was, dear brethren, the prayer of Christ, your Lord and our's, that his people might be one, and that for the most useful purposes,—that is, that they might be perfected in one, and that the world might believe, etc. We are, dear brethren, yours, in the bonds of a pure and peaceful conference.

Signed in behalf of the Philadelphia conference, at the annual meeting, in Philadelphia, 25th April, 1812.

WILLIAM S. FISHER.

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*The Conference of the United Brethren, to the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, greeting.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

We received your friendly address with much pleasure. We exult to hear that you are ready to enter into terms of union with us, as our brethren of the Baltimore conference have done, and pray that it may terminate in as happy a union, and we have no doubt but that it will, if you pursue the same charitable and friendly course toward us which they have taken. We wish, dear brethren, ever to do unto you as we would be done by. May the Lord unite our hearts in love,

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST. 365

and help us to pull together in the yoke of Christ, that we may be as true yoke-fellows indeed; and may the kingdom of our Savior be mightily established in the earth by our united efforts. Brethren, pray for us. We have appointed our brethren, Christian Smith and David Snyder, as messengers to your next conference, with whom you may consult on any subject leading toward our contemplated union. We remain yours, dear brethren, in the bonds of the peaceful Gospel.

Signed by order of conference, May 12th, 1812.

GEORGE A. GUETHING.

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*Address of the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to the German Conference of the United Brethren in Christ.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

Your friendly address by your brother and our's, and your messenger, Christian Smith, are received with pleasure. We beg you to be assured of our continued regard for you, and cordial desire of Christian union and communion, as far as may be consistent with the order and discipline of our respective churches. Our doctrines are fixed and established; our discipline is binding upon us, by the authority of the general conference; and we have long experienced and proved the great advantage of such regulations; consequently, to these, in our church communion of fellowship, we feel ourselves bound, by the most sacred obligations, to have an especial regard. And might we not, brethren, recommend them to your consideration, that you may prove all things, and hold fast that which is good? We have appointed our brethren, W. Hunter and H. Boehm, to present to you this address, and to assure you that

your messengers and communications will always be welcome to us. We are pleased to find, by the reports from different and distant places, that our blessed Redeemer is still carrying on the work of spiritual peace and reconciliation, notwithstanding the commotions and revolutions in the world; and we hope the time is not far distant when the human race shall be united as the common workmanship of the common Creator's hand, and the common purchase of the common Savior's blood. We pray our gracious and holy Lord abundantly to bless you, and incline your hearts to supplicate for us before his throne. May you be divinely assisted in all your deliberations, and see the Lord's pleasure abundantly prospering in your hands, to the glory of our God and your God, through Jesus Christ, your Lord and our's.

Signed in behalf of the conference.

WILLIAM S. FISHER, Sec'y.

Philadelphia, May 1st, 1813.

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This union was not destined long to flourish. The venerable patriarch in the M. E. church, Mr. Francis Asbury, who aided in forming it, and who rejoiced in it, went up to God on the 31st of March, 1816. Shortly after this, a prominent presiding elder, in his excessive zeal for Methodism, declared he would recognize the terms of union no longer, and that the members of the United Brethren church



could have free access to Methodist love-feasts and class-meetings on one condition only, and that was, by joining the M. E. church. He began to violate the terms of agreement in H——, at a Methodist quarterly meeting in a United Brethren meeting-house! This was, surely, beginning judgment at the house of God.\*

The Brethren, who have usually excelled in meekness and forbearance, if in little else, made no complaint;† and their meeting-houses, and class-meetings, and love-feasts, remained, as they are to this day, open and free.

\* Spayth, p. 115.

† Rev. Jacob Baulus moved to Sandusky, O., at an early day, and, in the spirit of this union, opened his house for a Methodist quarterly meeting. The meeting was a good one. Some of his children were converted, and received into the Methodist society. When the time for love-feast came, Baulus was not permitted to enter the room! We received this from the venerable man's own lips.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## "THE SO-CALLED ALBRIGHTS."—ANOTHER PROPOSED UNION.

DURING the first decade of the present century, an ecclesiastical seed was cast into the earth, which, at the first, seemed to be indeed the smallest and least promising of all seeds; and yet, under the care of the Great Husbandman, it has become a tree of very respectable size, under whose shade many thousands of God's children repose. A brief sketch of this society, and of a proposed union with the United Brethren, will be in place in these pages.

Jacob Albright, the founder of "the so-called Albrights," was born in Pennsylvania, in 1759. His parents were members of the Lutheran church, and he was trained up in the religion of his fathers, which, at that time, was still, in too many places, a religion of the *church*, and not of *Christ*. In his thirty-second year, he was

awakened to a full sense of his sins, and to the necessity of a change of heart. So great became his distress of mind, so deep his convictions of guilt, that he was ready to cry out in despair, "Ye mountains, fall on me, and, ye hills, cover me!" At length he says, "I fell on my knees, tears of bitter sorrow rolled over my cheeks, and a long, ardent, and inmost prayer ascended to the throne of grace, for mercy and the pardon of my sins. By and by, all anxiety and anguish of soul disappeared; happiness, and a joyous peace in God, filled my soul, God's Spirit bearing witness with my spirit that I had become a child of God. One happy sensation followed another, and such a heavenly joy pervaded my whole being, as no pen can describe, and no mortal can express."

Soon after this happy event, he united with the Methodist church, whose spirit and discipline he admired. His spirit was soon stirred within him, by what he regarded as the voice of God calling him to "go and work in the vineyard." The church to which he belonged authorized him to exhort; but, not appreciating his talents and call, or for some unexplained reason,



did not encourage him to enter fully upon the work of the ministry. But so pressed was he in spirit, that, notwithstanding this discouragement, and his limited educational advantages, he surrendered all to Christ, and went forth preaching the Gospel to the German people. He was not, naturally, a graceful speaker, but he knew the way of life from experience; and, being honest, zealous, and persevering, and enjoying a large measure of the Spirit, he preached with good effect. Not receiving encouragement from the Methodists, with whom he had united, he separated himself from them, and, in A. D. 1800, about four years after he began to preach, he organized three societies or classes, of which he himself took the oversight.

During the whole period of Mr. Albright's ministerial life, he was the object of persecution. The growth of the societies under his care, was extremely slow. At the end of the second year, the whole number of members had reached but 20; in 1803, the number arose to 40. He had, by this time, however, obtained two helpers in the ministry; and, in November of this year, fourteen of the leading laymen of the societies he had organized, met, and solemnly ordained

him to the ministry.\* In 1804, the Association numbered 60 members, and another preacher was added. In 1805, five years after the organization of the first societies, the whole number of members reached 75. This year, however, a very successful preacher, George Miller, was added to the ministerial force, and the work began to move more rapidly. The first conference was held in 1807. It was composed of all the preachers, exhorters, and class-leaders, in the society; in all 28—8 preachers, and 20 class-leaders and exhorters. This conference decided that Mr. Albright should draw up articles of faith, and a discipline, for the Association, in conformity with the Scriptures; but, dying six months thereafter, he did not accomplish the work. The conference, however, elected Mr. Albright superintendent or bishop. The whole membership of the society, at this time, was 220. On the 20th of the May following this election, the good man closed his labors in the 50th year of his age.

Up to the period of Mr. Albright's death, it was still a question in his mind, whether the society would continue to be an inde-

\* His. of Evangelical Association, p. 23

pendent organization. John Driesbach says: "About three months before his demise, \* \* I expressed to him my great desire that he would be able to draw up the projected articles of faith and discipline. His reply was: 'Brother John, if it is God's will for you to be and remain an independent organization, he will take care of you also in this particular; there will appear men among you who will accomplish what I am unable to do.'"

At the second conference, held in 1809, G. Miller was instructed to publish the Articles of Faith and Church Discipline, as drawn up by himself; and this conference gave the Association the name—"The So-called Al-brights,"—a name which was retained by the society until 1816, when "Evangelical Association" was substituted. The whole membership, in 1809, had reached 426. Up to the year 1813, the Association had worked hard, suffered much, and its increase had been very slow. At this period, it numbered 15 itinerant preachers, and about 800 members.

In April, 1813, Christian Newcomer, whose catholic soul would have bound all Christians together by the cords of love,

\* His. of Evangelical Association, p. 43.



visited the conference of the then "So-called Albrights," for the purpose of promoting a union of the two churches. The subject was freely discussed by that conference. Mr. N. laid the discipline of the United Brethren before the conference, for examination, and it seemed to meet with general and cordial approval; and they delivered to him a written communication on the subject of union, to be laid before the United Brethren conference, which was soon to meet at Christian Herre's, in Lancaster county, Pa.

The conference met at Brother Herre's, and the subject of union with "the Albrights" was discussed, favorably considered, and a committee of four Brethren were appointed to meet a like committee appointed by the "Albrights," for the purpose of uniting, if practicable, the two societies. This committee consisted of the following persons:—*United Brethren*—Christian Crum, C. Newcomer, Jos. Hoffman, and Jacob Baulus: *Albrights*—George Miller, John Walter, John Driesbach, and Henry Niebel. The committee met near New Berlin, Pa., Nov. 11th, 1813, and, after spending several days in consultation, they separated, failing entirely

to reach any satisfactory conclusion. The idea of a union, however, was not abandoned, and it was cherished with especial regard by Christian Newcomer and John Driesbach. Hence, we have, in Mr. Newcomer's journal, under date of April 3d, 1815, the following note:—"This morning, my poor soul is drawn out in prayer to God for sanctifying power. Oh, Lord! impart unto my soul thy nature and thy perfect love. I rode with Brother Henry Smith to Jacob Kleinfelter's, —the Albright brethren had their conference here. About 14 or 15 preachers had assembled. I made another attempt to effect a union between the two societies, but in vain."

Two years later still, another attempt was made at union. The subject had been discussed, at length, in the first general conference of the Evangelical Association, held in October, 1816. On the 14th of February, 1817, twelve ministers, six belonging to each society, met, in a social conference, at Henry Kumler's, once more to consider the question which had been before the two societies for four years. The names of the ministers composing this conference were:—*Of Evangelical Association*—J. Driesbach, H. Niebel,

S. Miller, John Kleinfelter, D. Thomas, and A. Ettinger. *Of the United Brethren*—C. Newcomer, J. Hoffman, Jacob Baulus, Abraham Mayer, Christian Berger, and Conrad Roth.

This conference also failed to effect a union, or to accomplish any thing toward it. "Yet," says Mr. Driesbach, "we prayed with and for each other, preached and exhorted alternately, bade each other God-speed in our operations, and pledged ourselves to treat one another as Christians and children of God." "Many members of both churches," continues Mr. D., "were displeased at the failure to effect a union, yet I believe it grieved none so much as it did Father Newcomer and myself." It is hardly necessary, after the lapse of nearly half a century, to enter into a discussion of the causes which prevented a union so much desired by some of the best men in both the rising churches. They related to the name of the denomination to be formed, the rights of local ministers, the example of washing feet, the itinerancy, and, it is alleged, without sufficient reason, we think, diverse views of a written discipline.\*

\* In the History of the Evangelical Association, p. 88, it is said



It was thought best to finish our notice of the friendly correspondence, and efforts at union, between the United Brethren in Christ and her sister churches, the Methodists and Evangelical brethren, although this has carried us a few years beyond the period of United Brethren history treated in this volume.

that the United Brethren "had not, at this time, a printed discipline, and its introduction was yet doubtful." This is a mistake.

## CHAPTER XVII.

P. KEMP, JOHN HERSHEY, MARTIN BOEHM,  
AND GEORGE A. GUETHING—THEIR LAST  
TESTIMONY.

WE must now go back a little, and witness the departure, from the field of toil, of some of the most venerated fathers of the church. Between 1811 and 1814, the angel of death was busy among them.

"Brother P. Kemp died at his residence, near Fredericktown, Maryland, February 26th, 1811. He had been an early and efficient supporter of the rising church. His house, for many years, had been the preacher's home, and continued to be so long after his decease. Some time in the night, he was asked by a brother, whether the love of Christ was present with him? He answered, 'O yes! bless the Lord, I shall soon be with him.'" He began to sink slowly till, in the morning, between five and six o'clock, he expired in the arms of

Jesus, while the family and friends were engaged in prayer around his dying bed. Brother G. A. Guething preached the funeral discourse from Psalms viii.: 5.

"Eight days had scarcely passed from the departure of Brother Kemp, when the church was called upon to part with another of her beloved sons in the Gospel. Brother John Hershey departed this life at his home, near Hagerstown, Maryland, March 4th, 1811. Like Brother Kemp, Brother Hershey was long a loving and tried friend in the cause of that religion which he honored and adorned by his pious and upright manner of living in this world, as one who knew that, when this earthly house should be dissolved, he had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Brother Hershey was a co-worker with Newcomer, Guething, and Otterbein. In him, the church lost a dear friend; but it has been, and is still, a consolation to know that his descendents have flourished in righteousness like the palm-tree, have stood by the Church in her trials, and have answered a father's prayer and legacy, bequeathed with his dying breath.



"The Church has wept  
 In sadness o'er the loss,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ they sleep,  
 Who bore on earth his cross.  
 And from the grave their dust shall rise,  
 In Christ's own image, to the skies!"

"Brother Martin Boehm fell asleep in Jesus, March 23d, 1812. His days of illness were but few. For a person of his age, he had enjoyed remarkably good health. He was active, and able to ride a short distance, until within a few days of his dissolution. But death came, and it found him ready. Its icy hand diminished the vital flame gradually, and without much pain. No one thought him near dying when the hour of his departure came. He asked to be raised up in his bed, and said he wished to sing and pray once more before he left. His request was granted, and he sang and prayed in a clear and distinct voice! This done, he asked to be laid back upon his pillow. This was done, and behold he was no more on earth.

"His remains rest with others in the cemetery, near his meeting-house, which overlooks the old homestead,—a fit resting-place for such a saint."\*

\* Spayth, pp. 123, 129.

THE

REV. MARTIN BOEHM,

*Died, March 23d, 1812,**Aged 86 years, 3 months, and 11 days.*

HE PREACHED THE GOSPEL

*Fifty-four Years.*

In justice to his memory, to the church in whose origin he was so intimately concerned, and to the truth of history, we must pause at the grave of this venerable patriarch, to review an account of William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, which first appeared in the Methodist Magazine, volume 6, pages 210 to 249. This sketch purports to have been furnished to bishop Asbury, a short time previous to his death, by his friend, F. Hollingsworth, the transcriber of the bishop's journal: it has also been embodied in the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church by Dr. Bangs, and may be found in volume 2, pages 365 to 376. Here is the matter referred to:—

“Martin Boehm, of whom we desire to speak, as a professor of religion and minister of Christ, the labors and experience of his life may be pretty justly estimated by what we learn from himself, communicated in answers to certain questions propounded to

him by his son Jacob, which we here transcribe:

“*Ques.* Father, when were you put into the ministry?

“*Ans.* My ministerial labors began about the year 1756. Three years afterward, by nomination to the lot, I received full pastoral orders.

“*Ques.* What was your religious experience during that time?

“*Ans.* I was sincere and strict in the religious duties of prayer in my family, in the congregation, and in the closet. I lived and preached according to the light I had,—I was a servant, and not a son; nor did I know any one, at that time, who could claim the birth-right by adoption, but Nancy Keagy, my mother's sister; she was a woman of great piety and singular devotion to God.

“*Ques.* By what means did you discover the nature and necessity of a real change of heart?

“*Ans.* By deep meditation upon the doctrine which I myself preached, of the fall of man, his sinful estate, and utter helplessness; I discovered and felt the want of Christ within, &c., &c.

“*Ques.* Were your labors owned of the



Lord in the awakening and conversion of souls?

*Ans.* Yes; many were brought to the knowledge of the truth. But it was a strange work; and some of the Mennonist meeting-houses were closed against me. Nevertheless I was received in other places. I now preached the Gospel spiritually and powerfully. Some years afterward, I was ex-communicated from the Mennonist church, on a charge truly enough advanced, of holding fellowship with other societies of a different language. I had invited the Methodists to my house, and they soon formed the society in my neighborhood, which exists to this day. My beloved wife Eve, my children, and my cousin Keagy's family, were among the first of its members. For myself, I felt my heart more greatly enlarged toward all religious persons, and to all denominations of Christians. Upward of thirty years ago, I became acquainted with my greatly beloved Brother William Otterbein, and several other ministers, who, about this time, had been ejected from their churches, as I had been from mine, because of their zeal, which was looked upon as an irregularity. We held many large

meetings in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Virginia, which generally lasted three days. At these meetings, hundreds were made the subjects of penitence and pardon. Being convinced of the necessity of order and discipline in the church of God, and having no wish to be at the head of a separate body, I advised serious persons to join the Methodists, whose doctrine, discipline, and zeal, suited, as I thought, an unlearned, sincere, and simple-hearted people. Several of the ministers with whom I labored, continued to meet in a conference of the German United Brethren; but we felt the difficulties arising from the want of that which the Methodists possessed. Age having overtaken me, with some of its accompanying infirmities, I could not travel as I had formerly done. In 1802, I enrolled my name on a Methodist class-book, and I have found great comfort in meeting with my brethren. I can truly say my last days are my best days. My beloved Eve is traveling with me the same road Zionward; my children, and most of my grandchildren, are made the partakers of the same grace. I am, this 12th of April, 1811, in my eighty-sixth year. Through the

boundless goodness of God, I am still able to visit the sick, and occasionally to preach in the neighborhood: to his name be all the glory, in Christ Jesus.'

"To this, bishop Asbury adds, as a tribute of respect:—

"'Honest and unsuspecting, he had not a strange face for strange people. He did not make the Gospel a charge to any one; his reward was souls and glory. His conversation was in heaven. Plain in dress and manners, when age had stamped its impress of reverence upon him, he filled the mind with the noble idea of a patriarch.'

"The first remark we make on the foregoing," says Mr. Spayth, "is, that, as Father Boehm spoke but little English at best, the foregoing questions and answers were neither written nor spoken by him in English. It is true that he went to Virginia in 1761, but not as Jacob would have it understood, before he had experienced a change of heart, *but after that event*. As to the statement we have given of the cause of his going to Virginia, we are safe to vouch for its correctness, for we had it *from his own lips*. For some reason, or



by some means, the statement given by Jacob, may be warped in the English version.

"The second exception we take, is, to the idea conveyed in the statement, that his name was enrolled on a Methodist class-book, in 1802. That his name was placed on the class-book referred to, is true, but the circumstances were as follows:—A meeting-house had been built on his land, principally by his aid, and that of his German brethren. Big meetings had been held at that place, at an early period of our history. We will take notice of one of those meetings, at Boehm's meeting-house, under date of October 17th, 1801. A sacramental meeting was appointed at this place: a great many people attended. Newcomer spoke first. The grace of God was powerfully present. Some were crying for mercy, and others praised God with a loud voice. At the evening meeting, the Lord displayed his power in a wonderful manner. Old and young were filled with joy: never, perhaps, was a whole congregation so happy. Sabbath morning was a happy and blessed time in love-feast. Brother D. Strickler spoke first; Neiding and Newcomer also addressed the audience. At candle-light, the house was

very full. In a short time, all were again quickened, and gave glory to God, for hope of immortality, and a foretaste of celestial joy.

"At this meeting-house, the Methodists had formed a class, previous to the year 1802, under a liberal construction of their rules, and, hence, with the free assent of Brother Boehm. But this liberality was, some time after, withdrawn, and the restrictive rule, relating to class-meetings and love-feasts, was insisted on, and even the venerable Boehm was not excepted. Here was a dilemma. To admit Brother Boehm, the preachers said, was in violation of an express disciplinary rule; and to deny him the privilege in his own meeting-house, was hard, but the law is imperative and binding. Now comes the gist of the matter. Brother Boehm was entreated, *for form's sake*, at least, to allow his name to go on the class-book, nominally, as a private member, and all would be right. To this, for peace's sake, he consented, and nothing more.

"How far the law of kindness, of Christian friendship and hospitality, and of pure love, had to stand aside in this case, we

leave to every one to say. As it was, it did not give the Brethren a moment's concern: nor would we here have taken any notice of it at all, had not the Methodist historian made it a subject of record. In conclusion on this topic, we remark, that Brother Boehm's relation to the Brethren church, was unbroken, from first to last, as has already been seen. This our annual conference proceedings sufficiently show. Thus, in 1800, in connection with Otterbein, he was elected bishop. He was prevented, by sickness, from attending the conference of 1801; attended conference in Maryland, in 1802; was re-elected bishop in 1805, and attended the conference in 1809, which was the last this devoted servant of the Lord enjoyed with his brethren in the church on earth. From this time to the time of his death, great age, with its accompanying infirmities, prevented him from attending an annual conference."\*

At the conference of 1812, George Adam Guething appeared in reasonable health, and in remarkably good spirits. He took a very active part in the business of the conference, and signed, if he did not pen, the ex-

\* Spayth, pp. 106—111.



cellent fraternal letter to the Philadelphia conference, which we have seen in a previous chapter.

Shortly after the conference, which had convened in his neighborhood, closed, accompanied by his wife, he went to Baltimore, to spend a week with his dearly-beloved Brother William Otterbein, whose infirmities confined him to the city. After reaching the city, he became somewhat indisposed. This induced him to shorten his visit. "Leaving the city for home, he put up at Mr. Snyder's, about thirty miles distant. Here his indisposition increased during the night. Early in the morning, he enjoyed a little rest, conversed with his companion and Mrs. Snyder about the Christian's hope, and the prospects of a glorious immortality. He became silent, and then said, 'I feel as though my end had come. Hark! hark!—who spoke? Whose voice is this I hear? Light! light! what golden light! Now all is dark again! Please help me out of this bed.' They did so. 'Now let us sing—

Komm' du lang verlangte Stunde,  
Komm' du Lebensgeist von oben;  
O wie soll mein froher Munde,  
Jesu deine Treue loben.

UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST. 389

Wann mich deine Liebesmacht,  
Dir zu dienen frei gemacht.'

TRANSLATION.

Come, thou long expected moment,  
Come, thou Spirit from on high,  
'Tis thy call, my Lord and Master;  
How shall I express my joy,  
When thy grace and power of love,  
Bids me rise to climes above?

"He now sank on his knees, leaning against the bed, and prayed fervently, giving thanks to God for his abundant mercy toward him, his unprofitable servant. A prayer, this was, offered up at the very gate of heaven, and in it, mark you, there was no doubt, no fear, no desire for a longer stay on earth; but God the Father was confidently asked, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Savior, to look upon him, to hear and accept this his petition, to receive his poor servant, and to take him to himself, for the sake of the great love where-with he had loved him, and delivered him from all evil.

"He was helped into bed again, and, in about fifteen minutes, while his hands were calmly folded, his ransomed spirit fled."\*

\* Spayth, pp. 129—131.

"In condescending love, thy ceaseless prayer He heard,  
And bade thee suddenly remove to thy complete reward :  
Ready to bring thee peace, thy beauteous feet were shod,  
When Mercy signed thy soul's release, and caught thee up to God.

"Redeemed from earth and pain, oh ! when shall we ascend,  
And all in Jesus' presence reign, with our translated friend ?  
Come, Lord, and quickly come ; and, when in thee complete,  
Receive thy longing servants home, to triumph at thy feet."

## THE

REV. GEORGE ADAM GUETHING

ENDED HIS LABORS AND HIS LIFE,

*June 28th, 1812.*

Aged 71 years, 4 months, and 22 days.

HE SPENT FORTY YEARS IN THE

MINISTRY.

A venerable Methodist minister, Henry Smith, now in his 92d year, in a letter before us, concerning the early United Brethren ministers, pays the following tribute to Guething:—"I was acquainted with Rev. G. A. Guething, and my dear father loved him above all men, for it was under his preaching, at one of their (the United Brethren) great meetings on Antietam, that he gave his heart to God: and dear Newcomer used to say to me, 'Your father was converted in my arms.' He was a gifted, eloquent, and powerful speaker. His voice was fine and sweet, and his preaching found way to the heart as well as the ear."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## CLOSE OF MR. OTTERBEIN'S LIFE.

Mr. Otterbein did not long survive his venerable and beloved co-laborers, Boehm and Guething. The year 1813 is marked with the closing period of his life. "His day had been long and toilsome; but the evening came, and with it calmness and undisturbed tranquility." "I gave an evening," says bishop Asbury, [the 22d of April, 1813] "to the great Otterbein. I found him placid and happy in God." The clouds had all departed, the sea was smooth, and not a ripple disturbed the passage of his bark through the "Golden Gate," into the heavenly port.

On the 1st of October, a little more than a month previous to his departure, he was visited by Christian Newcomer, who makes this note of the visit in his journal:—"Old Father Otterbein is weak and feeble in body, but strong and vigorous in

spirit, and full of hope of a blissful immortality and eternal life." Mr. Newcomer adds:—"He was greatly rejoiced at our arrival; informed me that he had received a letter from the Brethren in the west, wherein he was requested to ordain me, by the laying on of hands, to the office of elder and preacher of the Gospel, before his departure, adding, 'I have always considered myself too unworthy to perform this solemn injunction of the apostle, but now I perceive the necessity of doing so before I shall be removed.'"

After some further inquiry, it was decided that Christian Newcomer and Joseph Hoffman, who had visited the city in company with Newcomer, and Frederick Schaffer, one of the earliest fruits of Mr. Otterbein's labors in Lancaster, who was then assisting him in the city, should be ordained; and the following day was set for the performance of the solemn ceremony.

On the morning of the 2d of October, the Vestry of the church, a number of the brethren, and Rev. William Ryland, an elder in the Methodist Episcopal church, together with the candidates for ordination, assembled at the parsonage. Mr. Otterbein

was lifted from his bed and placed upon an easy chair; and it appeared that he had received an unction from the Holy One for the performance of this last public duty of his ministry.

He first spoke to the candidates for ordination, in a very spiritual and impressive manner, then fervently addressed a throne of grace for a blessing upon them; after which, being assisted to his feet, he laid his hands upon them, in connection with Mr. Ryland, solemnly repeating the ordination service. Certificates of ordination were then written in English and in German, which he signed and delivered to the brethren ordained.

We insert a copy of one of these certificates:—

Know, all men whom it may concern, that Joseph Hoffman is, this 2d day of October, 1813, in presence of the subscribers, leaders of the Congregation in Baltimore, by the Rev. Wilhelm Otterbein, in conjunction, and with assistance of William Ryland, Elder of the Methodist Society in Baltimore, by the laying on of hands, duly and solemnly ordained.



We desire and pray that his labors in the vineyard of the Lord may prove a blessing to many souls.

Given this 2d day of October, 1813.

(WITNESS.)

JOHN HILDT, Secretary.

WILLIAM BACKER { SEAL }

BALTZER SCHAEFFER { SEAL }

GOTTFRIED SUMWALT { SEAL }

*A True Copy.*

JACOB SMITH { SEAL }

WILLIAM OTTERBEIN.

On the following day, Brothers New-comer and Hoffman took their departure. Otterbein exhorted them to faithfulness, told them that God would be with them, and carry forward the good work through their instrumentality. His last words to them were:—"Farewell. If any inquire after me, tell them I die in the faith I have preached." He had suffered for some time, from an asthmatic affection, and, as his end drew near, it became more distressing. The friends who gathered about his bed, on the 17th of November, 1813, saw that the time of his departure had come. The Rev. Dr.

Kurtz, an evangelical Lutheran minister, who had long been his warm friend and co-laborer, offered up, at his bedside, the last vocal prayer. At its close, Otterbein responded in these words:—"Amen, amen! It is finished."

He now appeared to sink away, and the friends who gazed upon the solemn spectacle of a dying father and prince in Israel, were pierced with grief. Rallying once more, he said, slowly and distinctly:—

"Jesus, Jesus,—I die, but thou livest, and soon I shall live with thee." Then, addressing his friends, he continued, "The conflict is over and past. I begin to feel an unspeakable fullness of love and peace divine. Lay my head upon my pillow, and be still."

For a few moments, stillness reigned in the chamber of death,—no, not of *death*; rather let it be called the portal of *life*. "See!" whispered one, "how sweet, how easy he breathes." The chariot of Israel had come, with its celestial coursers, and was waiting at the gate. A smile, a fresh glow, lit up his countenance, and behold it was death.

"He taught us how to live, and, oh! too high  
A price of knowledge, taught us how to die."

His funeral solemnities were largely attended. Ministers and members of the various evangelical churches in the city crowded into the spacious edifice, which had so often resounded with his earnest voice, and paid an unfeigned respect to his memory. The funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Kurtz, who was with him in his last moments, from Matthew xx.: 8—"Call the laborers and give them their hire;"—a fitting theme to dwell upon, around the coffin of one who had been a laborer from the early morn of life till its setting sun.\*

Four months after Mr. Otterbein's death, the Baltimore annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal church convened in Baltimore. On the last day of the conference, bishop Asbury, who was then venerable in

\* One circumstance connected with Otterbein's death may not be unworthy of notice here. Brother A. Bruner, one of Otterbein's warmest friends, resided out of the city. Being sent for, at Mr. O.'s request, he came; but, having pressing business in New York, it was thought, by the physician, that Mr. O. would live until his return. While Mr. B. was in New York; he dreamed that he saw Mr. Otterbein fly up through the air, having seven lights in his hands, on which he awoke, and immediately looked at his watch. On his return to Baltimore, he ascertained that Mr. O. had died precisely at the time he had had his singular dream. He arrived just in time to meet the procession at the grave. The amiable and humble Bruner, who was himself a light, while on earth, has gone home. He died a peaceful and happy death, and has, long since, entered into rest.—*Spayth*.



years, and rapidly approaching the close of his life, preached, in Otterbein's church, a sermon on the death of Mr. Otterbein. This was done as a mark of respect for the memory of the sainted leader in Israel, and as a token of friendship and love to the United Brethren. United Brethren, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, thronged the house. The most eminent ministers of the M. E. church were present. Bishops Asbury and McKendree occupied the pulpit. The sermon was one befitting the occasion, and was spoken of, throughout the city, in terms of high praise.

Referring to the occasion in his journal, Mr. Asbury says:—"By request, I discoursed on the character of the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, in allusion to William Otterbein—the holy, the great Otterbein—whose funeral discourse it was intended to be. Solemnity marked the silent meeting in the German church, where were assembled the members of our conference, and many of the clergy of the city. Forty years have I known the retiring modesty of this man of God, towering majestic above his fellows, in learning, wisdom, and grace,

yet seeking to be known only to God, and the people of God."

"Mr. Otterbein's remains were deposited in the city of Baltimore, and church-yard on Howard's hill. On entering the gate immediately in front of the church from Conway-street, the passage to the church leads through a small yard, called Otterbein graveyard. There the sainted Father of blessed memory sleeps alone, there being no other grave in that apartment. The grave is adorned with two plain marble slabs, the upper one resting on four pillars of marble, with the following inscription:—

HIER RUHEN DIE GEBEINE  
DES VERSTORBENEN  
WILLIAM OTTERBEIN.  
Geboren 4. Juni 1726:  
Gestorben 17. November, 1813,  
SEINES ALTERS 87 JAHR, 6 MO-  
NATE, 13 TAGE.

"Selig sind die Todten, die in dem Herrn sterben; sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach."

HERE REST THE REMAINS  
OF  
WILLIAM OTTERBEIN.  
He was Born June 4, 1726:  
*Departed this Life* Nov. 17, 1813,  
AGED 87 YEARS, 5 MONTHS, AND  
13 DAYS.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

*In the Ministry 62 Years.*

It has been truly said that "Mr. Otterbein was no partisan." A man of a more catholic spirit never lived. From first to last, nothing was further from his purpose,

than to use his talents or his influence to occasion schism in any church, or to put himself forward as a leader; and although, under his guidance, and by his prudential measures, the work of reform and of revival advanced steadily onward, and acquired strength and stability constantly, yet "he would not be called chief."

"His character was pure. He was grave and serious, as became a minister of the Gospel. No light conversation, nor too free allusion to the divine Master or his attributes, ever escaped his lips." The supreme God,—infinite and eternal,—was with him, in word and thought, the profoundest object of reverence and subject of thought. His mind seemed filled with God, and was constantly exercised with the most reverential emotions.

In social intercourse, he was easy of access, especially to the seeker of religion; yet no one could approach him but with respect, or converse with him, without feeling the presence of a superior intellect and heart. Frank and simple in his manners, he always made conversation interesting, agreeable, and instructive.

As a Christian, Mr. Otterbein was emi-



nently evangelical and practical. His faith wavered not, and his love never failed. His meekness forsook him not through evil report and good report. Persecuted through the most of his ministerial life, he endured it without a murmur or complaint. When denounced, by bitter, unconverted ministers, as an "enthusiast," a "false prophet," and a "fanatic," he could never find it in his heart to reply with severity; but he could, and often did, weep over their blindness and the blindness of their churches, quoting the Savior's language—"Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

His humility was remarkable. Men of extensive learning, and of popular talent as public speakers, usually manifest a little itching for reputation; and, if they attain to eminence, are somewhat concerned about their posthumous fame: but Otterbein, profoundly learned though he was, never made the least display of it; and although, during the most of his life, he was without a superior in America, as a preacher, he had the lowliness of a child, and preferred all his brethren before himself. Educated thoroughly, and ordained regularly, in a sect-hating communion, he welcomed, as fellow-laborers in the Master's vineyard, un-

learned farmers and mechanics who felt that they had *religion*, and a *call* to preach, and not much besides. He could embrace, in his catholic heart, the Mennonite Boehm, or the Amish Draksel, and cry out before all the people, "*We are brethren!*"

His benevolence was of the very highest order. He literally gave away all he acquired, and all he inherited. "His mode of living was of the most frugal kind, and that to the last days of his life. And wherefore? That he might have the means to contribute to the destitute; and his acts of charity were limited only by his means. Daily, Sundays excepted, did the indigent, and the common beggars of the city, knock at his door for alms; and they were never turned away, if the means to grant relief were in the good minister's possession. We give a case: A suit of clothing was much worn, and his friends sent him cloth for a new suit. Still the old garments were worn. When asked if his tailor had forgotten him, he wiped a tear from his eye, and pointed to some indigent persons opposite his house. After this incident, some of the friends frequently furnished him with certain kinds of cloth for distribution

to the needy. His demise was an occasion of real sorrow to this class of people, who were not a few: heartily did they lament and mourn the loss of their earthly friend and patron.

"With them his name shall live,  
Through long succeeding years,  
Embalmed—with all their hearts can give,  
Their praises and their tears."

In reproof, he was very plain and pointed. A fault-finding professor once visited him, who became garrulous in his complaints against his brethren. In the midst of his harangue, Mr. O. touched him on the shoulder, and said, "Stop, brother! I perceive that you have got into the Devil's office!" meaning that he had become an accuser of the brethren.

But it was as a preacher and as an evangelist that he most excelled. His manner of preaching was calm and collected. "Every word was distinctly uttered," and every sentence completed. He was clear, solemn, earnest, and always profoundly impressed with the solemnity and importance of his position as an ambassador of Christ. His matter was, from first to last, CHRIST, and him crucified—CHRIST, our Wisdom,



Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption—CHRIST, the present and complete Savior, the Alpha and Omega, the all and in all. He excelled in depth of thought, in thoroughness of exposition, and in force of reasoning. When treating of redemption through Jesus, of the truth and power of the Gospel, and of the victory of faith, he was listened to with wonder and delight; "but when addressing impenitent sinners, every word seemed to weigh a talent, and every sentence to burn like fire:" yet, so deep and genuine was his sympathy for men, and his solicitude for their salvation, that he could not fail to win as well as awaken.

Christian Newcomer, who heard him preach at Antietam, in 1799, makes this note in his journal:—"William Otterbein delivered the first discourse. O, what a wonderful man he is to preach, and declare the counsel of God!" This was on Saturday. "Sunday, William Otterbein preached again with such power and unction from on high, that all present were much astonished."

At the age of seventy-five, Newcomer heard him again at Antietam. He says:—"Father O. preached, this forenoon, with such power and grace, that almost every soul on the

ground seemed to be pierced to the heart. We had a large congregation, and the attention of every soul was riveted to the spot. I spoke a few words after him, but for a short time, when the people broke forth into lamentations for mercy."

When Mr. O. had reached his eightieth year, Mr. N. listened to a sermon preached by him in Hagerstown, Md. He exclaims, "O! what feelings penetrate my soul whenever I hear this old servant of Christ declare the counsel of God. In depth of erudition, and in perspicuity of thought, he is unique and matchless."

No minister could readily forget the sermons which he delivered at the conferences. At one of the last of the conferences he was able to attend, he preached with great plainness, especially to the preachers. The audience was profoundly impressed, and the preachers, after the dismissal of the congregation, remained seated and silent, and their honest faces were wet with tears. C. Hershey, then a young man, for many years afterward a faithful preacher, and now a saint in glory, looked up and said, "Oh! my God, this man's word is heavy! Who is sufficient for these things?"

Rev. Dr. B. Kurtz, in a letter relating to Mr. O. and his co-laborers, says:

"Otterbein, that true and living witness, whose memory I hold dear, and cherish in my heart of hearts, was still laboring in faith and patience, and with great success, when I commenced preaching the Gospel; but, a short time before my arrival in Baltimore, the Master had called him home. The pious part of the community still delighted in calling to mind his unctious sermons, his holy walk and conversation, and his wonderful success in winning sinners from the error of their ways, as well as in encouraging the weak, and building up believers. My uncle, Rev. D. Kurtz, a true man of God, was a co-laborer of the sainted Otterbein, on terms of intimacy with him, and preached his funeral sermon. He often spoke to me about him, and always indicated the profound regard and ardent affection he entertained for him. In Washington county, Md., and in the adjacent parts of Virginia, (where I spent the first sixteen years of my ministry) Otterbein was well known. He frequently visited that section, and every-where I met with living seals of his ministry. The de-



votion and enthusiasm with which those who had been converted under his preaching spoke of his power in the pulpit, of his spirit and holy conversation in personal intercourse, and of his untiring labors to lead sinners to Christ, was really refreshing, and filled my heart with love and admiration for that chosen and distinguished servant of the Lord. I knew a number of the early preachers who had been converted by Otterbein's instrumentality, and preached in company with some of them, on funeral and other occasions. They were all men of God, and, though not learned, like Otterbein, (who was a scholar as well as a saint) they were faithful, devoted, and eminently useful. If ever there was a true revival preacher, Otterbein was one."

The following paper, found among the manuscripts of bishop Asbury, containing questions by Mr. A., and answers in the hand-writing of Otterbein, will be of interest to the reader:

"TO THE REV. WILLIAM OTTERBEIN.

"SIR:—Where were you born?

"*Ans.* In Nassau Dillenburg, in Germany.

"*Ques.* How many years had you lived in your native land?

*Ans.* Twenty-six years.

*Ques.* How many years have you resided in America?

*Ans.* Sixty years come next August.

*Ques.* Where were you educated?

*Ans.* In Herborn, in an academy.

*Ques.* What languages and sciences were you taught?

*Ans.* Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Philosophy, and Divinity.

*Ques.* In what order were you set apart for the ministry?

*Ans.* The Presbyterian form and order.

*Ques.* What ministers assisted in your ordination?

*Ans.* Schramm and Klingelhöfer.

*Ques.* Where have you had charge of congregations in America?

*Ans.* First in Lancaster, in Tulpehocken, in Fredericktown in Maryland, in Little York in Pennsylvania, and in Baltimore.

*Ques.* In what part of the United States have you frequently traveled, in the prosecution of your ministerial labors?

*Ans.* In Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

*Ques.* How many years of your life,

since you came to this continent, were you in a great measure an itinerant?

*Ans.* The chief of the time since my coming, but more largely since my coming to Baltimore.

*Ques.* By what means were you brought to the Gospel of God and our Savior?

*Ans.* By degrees was I brought to the knowledge of the truth while in Lancaster.

*Ques.* Have you unshaken confidence in God, through Christ, of your justification, sanctification, and sure hope of glorification?

*Ans.* The Lord has been good to me, and no doubt remains in my mind but he will be good; and I can now praise him for the hope of a better life.

*Ques.* Have you ever kept any account of the seals of your ministry?

*Ans.* None.

*Ques.* Have you ever kept any account of the members in the society of the United Brethren?

*Ans.* Only what are in Baltimore.

*Ques.* Have you taken any account of the brethren introduced into the ministry immediately by yourself, and sent out by you? Can you give the names of the living and the dead?



*Ans.* Henry Weidner, Henry Baker, Simon Herre, in Virginia: these are gone to their reward. Newcomer can give the names of the living.

*Ques.* What ministerial brethren, who have been your helpers, can you speak of with pleasure, and whose names are precious?

*Ans.* Guething, Weidner, Newcomer, and others.

*Ques.* What is your mind concerning John Wesley, and the order of Methodists in America?

*Ans.* I think highly of John Wesley. I think well of the Methodists in America.

*Ques.* What are your views of the present state of the church of Christ in Europe and America, and of prophecy?

*Ans.* In continental Europe, the church has lost, in a great degree, the light of truth. In England and America the light still shines. Prophecy is hastening to its accomplishment.

*Ques.* Will you give any commandment concerning your bones, and the memoirs of your life? Your children in Christ will not suffer you to die unnoticed.

"No answer returned to this last question."

These answers are all characteristic of Mr. Otterbein. He has nothing to boast of, no high professions to make, and declines to answer the question concerning his burial and the "memoirs of his life." He never sought the praise of men, and had no dread of dying "unnoticed." The glory of God absorbed his whole thought, and was the only object of his ambition.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## END OF THE FIRST PERIOD.—A RESUME.

WE have now reached the end of the first period in the History of the United Brethren in Christ. Nearly half a century has passed since Otterbein and Boehm met at Isaac Long's, at the great meeting where the people of God, of various persuasions, flowed together, and realized that they were United Brethren. We have seen how this union was consolidated and strengthened from year to year, how other societies were gathered in, and other ministers, of like faith, raised up and sent forth as heralds of salvation. We have contemplated the struggles of these evangelists to revive and reform the old communions with which they had been ecclesiastically connected, and how this had been but partially successful, and had resulted, in many instances, in their real or virtual expulsion from those communions. We have seen the infant churches



struggling to maintain the faith during the long war of the Revolution; and, in 1789, we have looked in upon the first conference of ministers regularly assembled; and we have traced those annual conferences down to 1812. On the minutes, many names have been recorded which will become familiar to us in the succeeding pages of this work. And it has been our mournful, and yet pleasing, duty, to gather around the graves of the eldest fathers of the United Brethren ministry. We have seen Boehm, Guething, Otterbein, and others of the fathers, die; and, blessed be the God of all grace, they have died well! "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." "The path of the just is as a light, shining more and more until the perfect day." These Scriptures have been illustrated before our eyes in the history, and especially the closing history, of those venerable saints of God.

It may be well to take our leave of this interesting period of United Brethren history, by presenting a comprehensive view of the fathers, and of their labors, sketched by the pen of a discriminating cotemporary

and co-laborer, who knew them well, and loved them as fellow-heirs of a like precious faith. In a discourse delivered on the death of Father Boehm, and shortly before the departure of Otterbein, bishop Asbury said:

"But our beloved brother, Boehm, who has gone to his high reward, was not the only laborer in the vineyard. Will it be hazarding too much to say that, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, there were one hundred preachers, and twenty thousand people, in the communion of the United Brethren? Many of these faithful men have gone to glory, and many are yet alive to preach to congregated thousands.

"Pre-eminent among these is William Otterbein, who assisted in the ordination which set apart your speaker to the superintendency of the Methodist Episcopal church. He is one of the best scholars and greatest divines in America. Why, then, is he not where he began? He was irregular. Alas, for us! the zealous are necessarily so, to those whose cry is, *put me into the priest's office, that I may eat a morsel of bread.* Osterwald has observed, 'Hell is

paved with the skulls of unfaithful ministers.' Such was not Boehm, such is not Otterbein; and now his sun of life is setting in brightness: behold the saint of God leaning upon his staff, waiting for the chariots of Israel!

"I pause here to indulge in reflections upon the past. Why was the German reformation in the middle states, that sprang up with Boehm, Otterbein, and their helpers, not more perfect? Was money, was labor made a consideration with these primitive men? No; they wanted not the one, and heeded not the other. They all had had church membership as Presbyterians, (German Reformed) Lutherans, Moravians, Tunkers, Mennonists. The spiritual men of these societies generally united with the reformers; but they brought along with them the formalities and peculiar opinions of religious education. Some of the ministers located, and only added to their charge partial traveling laborers. It remains to be proven, whether a reformation in any country, or under any circumstances, can be perpetuated without a well-directed itinerancy. But these faithful men of God were not the less zealous in declaring the truth. \* \* \*



Christian Newcomer, near Hagerstown, in Maryland, has labored and traveled many years. His heart's desire has always been to effect a union between his German brethren and the Methodists.

"I will not forget Abraham Draksel, a most acceptable preacher, in the west of Pennsylvania; Henry and Christian Crum, twin brothers, and twin souls in zeal and experience: these were holy, good men, and members of both societies. John Hershey, formerly a Mennonist—an Israelite;—he is gone to rest. Abraham and Christian Hershey, occasional itinerants, good men, busy and zealous. David Snyder: possessing gifts to make himself useful. Isaac Niswander: a good man, and good preacher. Most of these men were natives of Pennsylvania.

"The flame of German zeal has moved westward with emigration. In Ohio, we have Andrew Zellar and George Benedum, men of God, intrusted with a weighty charge, subjecting them to great labors.

"But our German fathers have lost many of their spiritual children. Some have returned whence they or their fathers came, and some have joined the Dutch Baptists.

"Our German reformers have left no jour-

nal or record, that I have seen or heard of, by which we might learn the extent of their labors; but, from Tennessee, where the excellent Baker labored and died, through Virginia and Maryland into Pennsylvania, as far eastward as Bucks and Berks counties, the effect of their ministry was happily seen and felt.

"We feel ourselves at liberty to believe that these German heralds of grace congregated one hundred thousand souls, that they have had twenty thousand in fellowship and communion, and one hundred zealous and acceptable preachers."

THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE CHURCH OF THE  
UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

BY JOHN LAWRENCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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HISTORY

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BY JOHN LAWRENCE

VOL. II

NEW YORK

1851

## PREFACE.

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IN this volume I have endeavored to trace the history of the church from the death of William Otterbein down to the present time—a period of nearly fifty years.

At the beginning of this period we shall find the church confined to the German settlements, without a printed discipline, printing establishment, newspaper, college, missionary society, or well-organized itineracy; two annual conference districts, both of which would now be regarded as mission-conferences, embracing the entire work. And we shall not find a single house of worship west of the Alleghany mountains, and but a few east of them.

Moreover, we shall see this humble German church pruned out, during a series of years, to such an extent, and by such a combination of causes, that we shall begin to despair of its very existence.

But as the first quarter of the century passes away we shall see the dawn of a brighter day. Efficient laborers, a well organized itineracy, an aggressive missionary move-

ment in the English communities, will pass in review before us.

Then we shall see how our excellent discipline was formed; and, it will be especially interesting, it is hoped, to trace the development of those great principles which distinguish the denomination from many other religious bodies.

When, in the providence of God, the church has been properly disciplined, we shall see it enter upon the great work of evangelization. We shall follow it into the new states and territories, and trace in each its rise and progress. We shall see its printing establishment rising, its schools of learning struggling into life, its missionary society organized, and sending out scores of efficient laborers.

And, at the end of the period, instead of a handful of zealous German Christians, melting away before adverse influences, breaking up the fallow-ground and sowing that others might reap, doubtful of their own continued existence as a separate people, we shall see a thoroughly organized church of nearly a hundred thousand members, united, earnest, and zealous; with a pious, intelligent and energetic ministry, excellent educational, publishing, and missionary organizations, and a healthy denominational spirit. And we shall discover that all this progress is but the development of that LIFE in the soul which comes from union with Christ, and which made United Brethren in Christ of Otterbein, Boehm,



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Guething, and the other German fathers, of the various sects and denominations of their day.

We shall then have before us the history of a church which originated in no schism, no doctrinal disputes or differences, no ecclesiastical discussions, but in the germination and growth of the divine WORD in individual hearts.

I have aimed to give faithful sketches of all the most useful and talented men, whether living or dead, who entered the field prior to 1840, of whom I have been able to obtain reliable information. There are good reasons why historical sketches of those who have entered the service and rendered distinguished aid to the Captain of our salvation, since 1840, should be deferred to a later period.

In the preparation of the sketches of the pioneers, I have been aided by a number of our aged ministers, who have kindly placed in my hands recollections of their co-laborers, concerning many of whom not a written or a printed line had been any where preserved. The United Brethren have eschewed biographies and autobiographies. But a single auto-biography or biography, if we may except some meager notices in our periodicals, has yet been published. Of some of our ablest ministers we know but this, that they entered the battle-field in youth, and fought valiantly until the day was well spent; and that they died bravely at their posts. It should not be a reason for severe censure if some names have

been passed over entirely, which deserve a distinguished place in these pages.

It is not pretended that all our early ministers—that all the pioneers—honored the sacred office, or were equal to those who have been noticed. This was not the case. A rising and rapidly-growing church, which obtains its ministry, not from the college but from the people, is peculiarly liable to imposition. It is an evil incident to the Gospel plan,—the best that can be devised,—of supplying the church with a ministry. A man, professing conversion, and possessing some talents, claims that he has a call to preach. The church is likely to accept his professions, and to receive him as a minister. Usually they are not deceived. But wolves in sheep's clothing have not found it very difficult to pass themselves off as true shepherds.

Many pages of this work might have been filled with sketches of some who ran well for a season, and then fainted; of others who began in the Spirit and ended in the flesh; and of others still, who crept into the sacred office, as wolves creep into a sheepfold, to make havoc of the flock; but it would neither be pleasant nor edifying to preserve the memory of the unfortunate or the wicked men who lie along the line of our history.

That some errors will be detected in this volume; that valid objections may be urged against its style, and its treatment of some subjects; and that a part, or the whole of

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it might have been better done by some other man, I do not entertain a doubt.

That God may make it a blessing to the dear people with whom it has been his happiness to be identified from youth, and with whom he hopes to toil for the extension of Christ's kingdom, in some humble capacity, to old age, is the prayer of the

AUTHOR.

Dayton, July 13th, 1861.



it might have been better if some other word had been chosen to describe the work. The word "study" is a little too general, and it is not clear from the title what the object of the study is. The word "history" is more specific, and it is clear from the title that the object of the study is the history of the United States. The word "history" is also a more common word, and it is more likely to be understood by a general reader. The word "study" is a more technical word, and it is more likely to be understood by a specialist. The word "history" is a more general word, and it is more likely to be understood by a general reader. The word "study" is a more specific word, and it is more likely to be understood by a specialist.

ALBANY

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### **PART THIRD.**

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## CHAPTER I.

### FROM THE DEATH OF OTTERBEIN TO THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE.

WHEN Mr. Otterbein died, the country was involved in the "second war of independence." This war was commenced in 1812, and did not close until 1815; and the excitement it occasioned, the passions it aroused, and the draft which it made upon the resources of the country, exerted a depressing influence upon every Christian church. Upon the infant United Brethren church,—a church which had assiduously cultivated "peace on earth, and good will to men,"—the effect was disheartening in the extreme.

Another fact exerted a much more permanent and extensive influence, unfavorably, upon the rising church. At the period of Mr. O.'s death, and for several years thereafter, while the German element in the American states was constantly giving way to the English, it received but trifling reinforcements from Europe. The whole number of

immigrants who reached this country from all the states of Europe, between 1784 and 1819, has been estimated, by a good authority, at 150,000. Of this number probably not more than fifty thousand were from Germany. And the whole number of foreigners who arrived by sea, in the year ending September 1820, was 8,385; 1821, 9,127; 1822, 6,911; 1823, 6,354; 1824, 7,912. Probably less than the half of these were from Germany. The language of the law, the government, the literature, and the schools, being English, rapid encroachments upon the German tongue, even in the largest German settlements, were inevitable.

Consequently, in almost every place, there was a demand for preaching in the English language; and this demand was especially urgent in those communities where a new religious life had been awakened by the United Brethren evangelists. This especial urgency was owing to two facts: 1. The converted children of the very best United Brethren families, having received an English education, desired to hear preaching in the English language. 2. In almost every community where the German fathers planted societies, persons were awakened and converted who

could understand the German language but imperfectly, or who could not understand it at all; and such persons would naturally be very anxious, on their own account, as well as for the sake of their children and English neighbors, to secure evangelical preaching in the English language.

And, at this very time, the most effective itinerant system ever put in motion since the days of the apostles, supplied the men, at all points, to meet this demand. Evangelists trained under the eye of Wesley, or raised up and put into the work by Francis Asbury, were prepared to respond to every call, and to make the best use of every opportunity. And that nothing might be wanting to facilitate the establishment of Methodist societies in United Brethren communities, a plan of co-operation had been adopted which provided that lists of all United Brethren members and ministers, living within the bounds of Methodist circuits and districts, should be kept by the Methodist preachers and presiding elders, and handed over to their successors; also, that all United Brethren preaching places should be open to Methodist preachers.\* It is true

\* See Vol. I., page 349-355.



that Methodist houses of worship were also to be open to United Brethren (*except in those cases where the trustees should object;*) but as those houses were in English communities, they afforded no material advantages to German evangelists.

To these arrangements no valid objection could be urged, for the early Methodists, and the United Brethren, were as thoroughly one people, in heart and practice, as the spirit of God could make them; and yet it is easy to see how this fraternal intercourse and unity wrought to the disadvantage of the United Brethren as a denomination. A wealthy United Brethren farmer, for example, would invite a Methodist itinerant to take up an appointment at his house; a revival would follow; a Methodist class would be formed; and, after a few years, a Methodist house of worship would be erected on the good farmer's land, and all his children would become Methodists; and one of his sons, probably, would become a Methodist itinerant preacher. And, "in the formation of classes, United Brethren in Christ, in many instances, allowed their names to go on the English (Methodist) class-books, with no intent to withdraw from the Brethren,

but in order that they might be admitted to certain privileges; thus becoming, virtually, members of both churches.\* This created no jealousy, but rather a cause of rejoicing, for it formed a connecting link between the two churches, characteristic of that happiness, love, and friendship, the echoes of which the heart sighs to experience again. \* \* But by the steady increase of the English language, these members, their families, their names and influence, gradually melted away from the Brethren classes and church forever. \* \* It is just to caution the reader not to infer that a proselyting spirit moved the Methodist preachers to effect this change and subsequent loss to the United Brethren church. No. To their praise be it said, they loved the Brethren, for they saw and felt that, like the ox, they had bowed their neck to the Gospel yoke, laboring with unequaled patience to win the erring Germans to the fear and favor of God."†

Associated with the loss of families and societies, was the loss of efficient laborers. The United Brethren, like the Methodists, looked to the converts for their ministry.

\* This was provided for in the plan of co-operation. See Vol. I., p. 356.

† H. G. Spayth.

A young man, among the United Brethren, looking to the itinerant ministry, was almost sure, during this period of our history, to enlist in the Methodist ranks. The inducements were almost too great to be resisted. To the Methodist itinerant the whole country was open, from Maine to Georgia; whereas, the Germans were confined to less than the half of Pennsylvania, and a fraction of Maryland and Virginia.

In the Methodist work, the English language, the language in which the young men of the United Brethren church received their education, was used. This was an additional inducement. Then, again, the Methodist itineracy was better, far better organized. It was thoroughly systematized, and was running like finished machinery.

In the United Brethren church the itinerant spirit did not so generally prevail among the preachers; nor was the value of the itinerant system so generally appreciated by the members of the church. While a few favored a settled pastorate, many were attached to the system which cost the people neither money nor price. Hence, the prospects of a United Brethren itinerant, which have never been very flattering when re-



garded from a pecuniary stand-point, were exceedingly gloomy during the period under consideration. Is it any wonder that many of our most promising young men went to the Methodist conference, especially as they had reason to believe that the churches would soon be united, and that the difference between them was simply a difference of language?

"A young man of good education and talents, who had buckled on the armor to go forth and do battle for the Lord as a United Brethren itinerant, was met on his way, by a friend, who accosted him thus: 'What, going to preach for the Dutch, and starve?'"\* None did starve, yet many were compelled to labor with their hands to procure the means of subsistence.

The lack of a denominational spirit also worked to the serious injury of the church, even down to so late a period as 1830. The Brethren, as already seen, were converts to Christ, gathered from the various German churches, all of which were of the "straightest sect." Against the intolerant sectarian spirit to which they had been accustomed, the reaction of those converts, when they

\* Speyth.

found themselves to be *all one in Christ*, by virtue of the new birth, was so powerful as to push many of them into an opposite extreme. Sectarianism was confounded with denominationalism. Hence, large numbers of those who, by the attraction of divine love, formed themselves into United Brethren societies, refused to have their names recorded in a church book, and were slow to submit to any discipline except the New Testament. And it was not until a long and painful experience had demonstrated the necessity of it, that they became willing, in some of the old localities, to co-operate with their brethren in a thorough denominational organization.

There is something quite beautiful in theory, in taking the Bible as a discipline, in being but loosely attached to any particular church, and in speaking, hearing, and paying and praying, wherever *convenience* or *inclination* may lead; but in practice, the effect is bad. A society composed of the choicest spirits on earth, which is actuated by no denominational spirit, will decline, and eventually perish.

Owing to these causes the United Brethren in Christ were so pruned out, during a

series of years, running from 1810 to 1821, that "outside friends anticipated the time to be near when the stock itself would die; yet it did not die, nor did it show any signs of decay." When thoroughly pruned, and its vitality tested, it pleased God to visit the vine, to water it, and cause it to put forth new and more vigorous branches. The language of Isaiah was fulfilled: "Then shalt thou say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, and a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone; these, where had they been?" On the loss of members and gospel laborers of which the United Brethren did not reap the fruit, Bishop Asbury makes this reflection: "But our German fathers have lost many of their spiritual children;" and then he asks, "Why was the German reformation in the Middle States, that sprang up with Boehm and Otterbein, and their helpers, not more perfect? Was money, was labor, made a consideration with these primitive men? No. They wanted not the one, and heeded not the other." Causes over which they had not control, placed them in the rear. Had the relations



of Otterbein and Asbury been changed, and of the Methodists and the United Brethren as to language and country, who can say that the relative strength of the two churches would not have been the reverse of what it is to-day?

The fathers were not insensible to the difficulties and peculiar trials of their position; and, in an address to the conference, one of the last attended by him, Mr. Otterbein said:

"It is true, brethren, the German work is a hard work; yet faint not, and in due season you shall reap. The Lord has greatly blessed our labors, and stood by us. Brethren, be men of God; be strong in faith. Love God; love all men with a pure heart fervently; employ every power to save them, to pluck them as brands from the burning; and while you do this, remember that it is not from men that you are to expect the reward of your labor, but from the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. \* \* \* Ours is a calling to labor. Our rest is not here. I beseech you, dear brethren, to take no account of this labor. One soul saved, one sinner turned from the error of his way, will more than compensate you for all you have done.

\* \* Watch over yourselves; live near to God. Insist on repentance, a change of heart, and show to the people that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And be ye yourselves holy, that the people may see and believe that the Lord has sent you.

\* \* You read good books;—it is well; but the Bible is the only fountain of unerring truth, and from the Bible we must learn our mission and our duty. \* \* \* By this word we shall be judged, and by it our works shall be tried." These words were spoken with deep emotion.\*

Under these circumstances the conference in the east, commonly called the Hagerstown conference, convened at Hagerstown, Md., May the 24th, 1814. Twenty-one ministers were present. The names of the absent members are not given in the minutes, and we have no means of determining their number; but as the conference included the whole of the work in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, it is safe to conclude that as many were absent as present. During the conference, six persons were admitted, increasing the number present to twenty-seven. Among those received, were Henry Kumler,

\* H. G. Spayth.

Jacob Wenger, and Henry James Fry, names precious in the memory of the church. Letters were read before the conference from Abraham Draksel and Jacob Berger, both of whom were, at this period, laboring in Westmoreland Co., Pa. A letter was also read from the Baltimore conference of the M. E. church, expressive of the fraternal interest still existing between the two societies, and of the desire of the conference that it might be perpetuated.

A petition was also received from the vestry of the Otterbein church in Baltimore, praying the conference to supply the church with a pastor, and pledging themselves for his support. A committee, consisting of Neiding, Snyder, Baulus and Newcomer, was appointed, to take the petition into consideration. It should be remarked that the congregation of the old church in Baltimore was thoroughly United Brethren, and entirely in sympathy with the conference; but it had been organized as an independent church, before the United Brethren in Christ were formally organized; therefore in the provision of pastors by the conference, the peculiar circumstances of the church had to be considered.



The committee reported that Joseph Hoffman be appointed to fill the charge in Baltimore, for one year, and that, if desired, he be sent back, but not for a longer period than three years. This appointment was entirely satisfactory to the Otterbein congregation, and Mr. Hoffman continued to be their pastor for three years, and discharged the duties of his office with distinguished ability and success. At the expiration of the time prescribed by discipline, another minister was appointed; and thus the church has been supplied, first by the Hagerstown, and subsequently by the Pennsylvania conference, to the present period.

Christian Newcomer, who had been elected bishop at the previous conference, for one year only, was re-elected at this conference for a term of three years. The good man makes this note of his election in his journal:—"The Brethren elected poor unworthy Christian Newcomer, as bishop or superintendent, for three years. May God have mercy on me, and grant me his assisting grace to discharge my duty faithfully."

The conference appointed the first Thursday of the following August to be observed by the church as a day of fasting and prayer.

The session appears to have been a peaceable one, and the secretary, Jacob Baulus, closes the minute of the proceedings with this prayer: "Lord Jesus! be with thy servants; mold them after thine own image; give them godly zeal and untiring faithfulness; let thy virtues shine in them, and thy light shine through them; and may many be brought to light, and we will ascribe all the praise to God. Amen."

But by far the most important measure which occupied the attention of the Hagerstown conference, remains to be noticed. The demand for an improved and a printed discipline, which had been felt for some time, now became imperious. As Otterbein, Guething, and Boehm, were gone, there was no man in the church whose *personal* influence was sufficient to enforce the general and excellent, but unprinted, rules of the society, and preserve unity and purity. There were excellent men in the church, and among them Christian Newcomer, who, prior to the death of Otterbein, had been elected a superintendent or bishop; and there were able men in the west, but there was no one who could fill the place vacated by Mr. Otterbein. And, what rendered the adoption of a written dis-

cipline, and a well systematized form of government still more necessary, was the fact that the church was extending her borders into Ohio, and even into Indiana; and as the preachers went abroad into places where the United Brethren in Christ had not been so much as named, it became necessary for them to produce, in a printed form, her doctrine and discipline.

Owing to the pressure of this necessity, two manuscript copies of a discipline were laid before the conference, for examination,—one by the superintendent, C. Newcomer, the other by Christopher Grosh, a very able and influential minister, who had been, in the former part of his life, a Moravian. But as the church in the west had become quite strong, it was deemed best to defer action on the subject until a general conference might be convened, in which the Miami conference might also be represented. And as that conference would meet in the course of a few months, the superintendent was “requested to call its attention to the plan of holding a general conference;” and it was also desired by the Hagerstown conference, that the conference in the west should determine the mode of electing delegates to represent the church.



The Miami conference met in Montgomery Co., O., August 23, 1814. There were present at the opening of the session, fifteen ministers. The question of a general conference was taken up as soon as the preliminary business was disposed of; and it was agreed that such a conference was desirable, and should be called. It was also decided that the delegates to the conference should be elected by a vote of the members of the church in the several districts. The church was then districted as follows:—

- 1st District, Baltimore.
- 2d     "     Hagerstown.
- 3d     "     Carlisle.
- 4th    "     Pennsylvania, south of the Alleghanies.
- 5th    "     Pennsylvania, north of the Alleghanies.
- 6th    "     Muskingum.
- 7th    "     New Lancaster, Ohio.
- 8th    "     Miami.
- 9th    "     Indiana and Kentucky.
- 10th   "     Virginia.

Each district was authorized to elect two delegates; and it was resolved that, to the general convention thus elected, should be committed the rules of the church, with full

powers to so alter and amend as best to promote the cause of Christ in the earth. These conclusions were reached with very great unanimity. On the day the conference opened, bishop Newcomer made this note in his journal: "O! may the Lord take the helm into his own hands, grant us grace to transact our business, patience and brotherly love to bear with each other, and that all we do may be according to His will, and tend to His glory." At its close, he wrote: "We had considerably less difficulty than I expected, and closed the session in great harmony and unanimity. Praise the Lord for it."

Thus the important question of a general convention was settled, in every particular, except as to the time and place of meeting. The Miami conference recommended Abraham Draksel's, near Mt. Pleasant, Pa., as a suitable place, it being midway between the Hagerstown and Miami conferences, and November 22d, 1814, as the time. The suggestion as to the place was accepted, but the time was changed to June 6th, 1815.

At this important session of the Miami conference, some other matters worthy of note, were acted upon. It was agreed, by

a unanimous vote, to support the itinerant plan. A collection of German Hymns, made by Henry Evinger and Thomas Winter, was laid before the conference, and examined; but action in relation thereto was postponed until after the general convention. Rev. B. Sales, a messenger from the Methodist conference, appeared, and read a letter with which he was charged in relation to brotherly union. The letter was taken into consideration, and an answer returned. Then the conference adjourned, peace and good will prevailing.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE.—THE DISCIPLINE.

ON the 6th of June, 1815, a little more than three months after the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain was ratified, THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE of the United Brethren in Christ convened at the place which had been designated. But it was not in stately church or cathedral that they assembled. No loud-sounding bells called the people together; no reporters for a daily press were present to take note of the proceedings. We remember, however, that some of the synods of the primitive United Brethren were held in unfrequented forests, under the sheltering rocks, and branches of the trees; and that caves and catacombs have been honored by the presence of Christian councils. Our first general conference was held in an humble log house, known as JOHN BONNET'S school-

house, situated about one mile east of Mt. Pleasant, Pa., on the old turnpike road leading over the Alleghanies. Chestnut Ridge is in full view, and the landscape between the school-house (which is yet standing) and the mountains is surpassingly lovely and picturesque. Mr. Bonnet was a devoted member of the church: and in the neighborhood of the school-house resided the venerable Abraham Draksel.

The following delegates were present:

*From Pennsylvania:*—Abraham Mayer, Henry Kumler, John Snyder, Abraham Draksel, and Christian Berger.

*Virginia:*—Christian Crum, Isaac Niswander, and Henry G. Spayth.

*Maryland:*—C. Newcomer and Jacob Baulus.

*Ohio:*—Andrew Zeller, Abraham Hiestand, Daniel Troyer, and George Benedum.

Joseph Hoffman was elected to represent Baltimore, but was unable to attend on account of illness. Fourteen only of the twenty delegates provided for in the Miami resolutions took their seats. A general conference, composed of fourteen plain ministers, all speaking the German language, assembled in a log school-house, in a quiet country place,

may not strike the imagination very forcibly, and some may hastily dismiss it as unworthy of notice. But, hold! The Lord of glory was cradled in a manger! his harbinger, the greatest of prophets, appeared in the wilderness of Judea! and many of his most important conferences with his disciples were held in retired places!

Nor must we turn away from this conference because it was graced by no distinguished Doctors of Theology, no patron princes, no celebrated literary lights; for, in the conference on the Mount of Olives, which received the commission to disciple all nations, no prince,—not one learned doctor,—not a single great literary light was found. There was the pure-minded Nathaniel, the impulsive Peter, the devoted John. And in the humble conference to which the reader has just been introduced, were found men of sound minds,—of warm Christian hearts—men thoroughly read in the Bible, and well trained in the school of experience,—humble men—such as God can use, because they will give him the glory. They had, nearly all of them, either been introduced into the ministry under the superintendence of Otterbein, or had enjoyed



a personal acquaintance with him. A number of them had labored with him for many years, and had long enjoyed the benefit of his godly counsels.

C. Newcomer and A. Zeller were elected to preside, and Jacob Baulus and H. G. Spayth were chosen secretaries. To Mr. Spayth we are indebted for the only report in existence of the spirit which animated the conference. "This being," he says,\* "the first general conference, elected by the church under somewhat peculiar circumstances, and meeting for a purpose in a measure new and untried in the history and progress of this church; and having so lately been deprived of the support and counsel of the wisest and best, who had exercised the oversight of the church, to the time of their departure; whose counsel was law, but that law was love, much embarrassment for a time was manifest. Others, wise and good, the church still had. True, these might fill the office of those who had gone home; but not their place. The seat might be occupied, but the place was vacant. This was never before, nor since, as deeply felt as at

\* History of the United Brethren in Christ, p. 149.

the opening, and for the first two days of that general conference.

“Nor will we disguise the truth,—the sky was not exactly clear. A heavy atmosphere would ever and anon press and swell the bosom; and then came ruffling breezes and sharp words. This could not last long. The darkening clouds which hung over the conference must be cleared away; a calm atmosphere and a clear sky could not be dispensed with—a pause ensued. The conference agreed to humble themselves before God in prayer; and such a prayer-meeting your humble servant never witnessed before, nor since! Brethren, with streaming eyes, embraced and thanked God! From that hour to the end, unanimity and love smiled joyously on that assembly.

“Permit a special notice here: Nothing, perhaps, was anticipated with greater certainty by any delegate, in going to that conference, than that the meeting should take place in the sweetest and most humble subordination to each other, each esteeming his brother higher than himself, and worthy of more honor. But the spirit of the children of Zebedee and their mother, is still visible on such occasions; and never more so

than when wise and good rulers, either in church or state, are removed by death. For who should have sufficient wisdom—who should be so well qualified to take the helm, and guide the vessel safely, as the Zebedees? And should a doubt be raised, they are ready to answer, we are able.

“Our last word, when we made the digression, was, ‘Smiled joyously on that assembly.’ Here were dear brethren who had stood long, and stood firmly, in the cause of God and man. The spirit of ambition had vanished; its shadow was seen no more. The brethren, it was manifest, had but one eye, one ear, one soul, one great thought, and that was, to form a discipline, containing the fewest sections or divisions practicable, and in as few words as the grave subject would admit of, in order to convey the sense and meaning of church rules, as held by the United Brethren in Christ.”

At the end of four days of diligent labor, the conference completed its work, and ordered the discipline agreed upon to be printed. This discipline contained no new doctrine; nor did it adopt any new feature of church polity. The great truths of the New Testament,—the truths maintained by the



Waldenses, and so clearly set forth in their confessions,\*—were re-affirmed in the simple and almost exact language of the Apostles' Creed.

"In the name of God, we declare and confess before all men," said they, "that we believe in the only true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that these three are one—the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost equal in essence or being with both; that this triune God created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, visible as well as invisible; and, furthermore, sustains, governs, protects, and supports the same.

"We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is very God and man; that he became incarnate by the power of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, and was born of her; that he is the Savior and Mediator of the whole human race, if they, with full faith in him, accept the grace proffered in Jesus; that this Jesus suffered and died on the cross for us, was buried, arose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, to intercede for

\* See Vol. 1, p. 31.

us; and that he shall come again at the last day, to judge the quick and the dead.

"We believe in the Holy Ghost; that he is equal in being with the Father and the Son, and that he comforts the faithful, and guides them into all truth.

"We believe in a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

"We believe that the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the word of God; that it contains the only true way to our salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God, as the only rule and guide; and that, without faith in Jesus Christ, true repentance, forgiveness of sins, and following after Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

"We also believe that what is contained in the Holy Scriptures, to-wit, the fall in Adam, and redemption through Jesus Christ, shall be preached throughout the world.

"We believe that the ordinances, viz., baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be in use, and practiced by all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on

all the children of God particularly to practice them; but the manner in which ought always to be left to the judgment and understanding of every individual. Also, the example of washing the feet must remain free to the judgment of every one."

The liberal views respecting the ordinances, contained in the last paragraph of the Confession, were not new to the general conference of 1815; they had been entertained by Otterbein, Boehm, and all the fathers. There is yet extant a somewhat elaborate Confession of Faith, printed in 1812, three years previous to the general conference, by Christopher Grosh, from which a few passages may be quoted as illustrative of the current views of the United Brethren at that period. Referring to those who regard baptism with water as an indispensable means of salvation, he says:

"There are four denominations which insist on baptism by immersion as positively necessary unto salvation; yet these can not tolerate a friendly association with each other!! There are three denominations which insist on a copious pouring or sprinkling; and yet these seven stand so far separated as if each were alone in the earth!! And yet, each



of these denominations has (according to its views) the Scriptures entirely on its side. Heaven be merciful!

"I see, therefore, no better or surer way before me than to keep myself, as much as possible, out of this whirlpool of human reasoning, and live in love with all the children of God, who are among the above-named (denominations); because I feel assured that God has his people amongst all those, who act in love and stand in friendship. And I will baptize such as desire it, in such manner as they, from an understanding of the Scriptures, desire it—in the water, under the water, out of the water, and with water; and I will offer the hand of fellowship to all such, be they of whatever denomination, having received whatever mode of baptism, or no baptism of water at all, *if they have only received the one thing needful*, of which Christ spoke to Martha, and are free from party (sectarian) spirit. All such I acknowledge to be my brethren and sisters."

These broad views accord entirely with the Confession adopted in 1815; and, as this is a point of vital importance, the reader will be pleased to find here a more extended

review of this subject, by one of the most careful and clear-headed members of the first general conference.\* Referring to the fathers, he says:—In speaking of this ordinance in public or in private, no one mode was magnified or disparaged. No one's baptism was declared void. No attempt was made to bind the mind to a form,—and thus to wound a tender conscience, and thus to esteem men differently, where God in his callings, gifts, and graces, had made no difference.”

“It was not water baptism, nor any mode of baptism, which had made them one in Christ; and they reasoned thus: ‘Baptism has not made us to harmonize in our religious experience, has not made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, has not been the means of removing the partition wall which has, until recently, kept us far from each other; it was not water baptism, but the converting power of God,—the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which has caused us to love as brethren, and therefore water baptism shall not separate us.’

“With such views Otterbein and Boehm knew no such thing as a compromise,—an

\* H. G. Spayth MS. in Telescope Office.

agreeing to disagree on this question; their union rested on a surer basis,—on higher and holier principles. They made a distinction between the immutable PRINCIPLES of religion and the FORMS of religion. As able ministers of the New Testament, they contended for the supremacy of the Scriptures, for justification by faith, and regeneration through the Holy Ghost.

“Boehm would witness the baptism of an infant by Otterbein with benignity of countenance, and love beaming from his eyes; but, lest he might offend his Mennonite brethren and kinsmen in the flesh, Boehm himself baptized none but adults.”

These views accord with the practice of inspired men. John the Baptist said: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” St. Paul said, “For God sent me not to baptize, but to preach.” From these, and similar passages, we are not to infer that water baptism is to be neglected, or that it is an ordinance of no importance, but that it is an outward form; and that, beautiful and impressive as



it is, it should not be placed on a level with that higher baptism, of which it is but the shadow. Nor must it be inferred from the liberal views entertained by the United Brethren respecting the mode of baptism, that they intended either to disparage, or to neglect, the ordinance. They say—"Baptism and the remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Lord are to be in use, and practiced in all Christian societies; and that it is incumbent on God's children particularly to practice them." And they did attend to the consecrating ordinance faithfully; but they did not make baptism by water, much less baptism by any particular *mode*, a test of Christian fellowship. They took the ground taken by all the evangelical denominations who joined in the great union prayer and conference meetings which have distinguished the recent religious awakening in America, and in Europe; and if ever the Christian world becomes united in the bonds of genuine fellowship, it must be, so it seems to us, on the high ground assumed by our German fathers.

Our Lord Jesus, the same night on which he was betrayed, took a towel and a basin of water, and washed and wiped the feet of

his disciples. The early brethren were generally of the opinion that the Savior intended, by this act, to teach his people, in all ages, that they should willingly perform for one another the most humble services which their necessities might require; that he who would be a useful and happy Christian must not be unwilling to stoop to the performance of menial toil, when the temporal or spiritual good of even the humblest disciple demands it. Some of the brethren were of the opinion that the example should be followed literally; and their views and practice were always respected: and those who gave the words a literal interpretation, on their part, passed no severe judgment upon those who differed with them as to the manner in which the example should be observed. The last item of the Confession embodies these just and charitable views.

So much for the Confession of Faith, or doctrine of the church; and, now, a few words must be added in regard to its polity.

THE ITINERANT PLAN, which had been tried and approved, was adopted as the best plan for evangelizing the world; and measures were introduced to render it more effective.

It was agreed that the various spiritual interests of the church should be managed by quarterly, yearly, and quadrennial conferences.

To the quarterly conference, made up of the stewards, leaders, exhorters, and preachers, of a particular charge, were committed the interests of the church, in relation to the support of the itinerant preachers, the erection of churches and parsonages, the granting of license to candidates for the regular ministry, the hearing of complaints, and the trial of appeals which might come up from the various classes or churches constituting the charge. The presiding elders, who were, *ex-officio*, chairmen of the quarterly conferences, were authorized to appoint them on the various fields of labor composing their districts.

The annual conference, composed of all the regularly constituted preachers, local and traveling, within the boundaries of the conference, was authorized to supervise the moral and ministerial character of all its members, hear reports from the various fields, regulate the boundaries of the circuits, missions, and districts, institute new fields of labor, receive and license applicants for the



ministry, ordain suitable persons to the office of presbyter or elder, and give to the itinerants their fields of labor. The bishops were authorized to appoint the annual conferences and to preside over their deliberations.

The general or quadrennial conference, composed of delegates, elected from among the elders by a popular vote of the members of the whole church, in the various conferences, was empowered to review the action of the annual conferences, determine their boundaries, institute new conferences, elect the general superintendents, make such new rules and regulations as the progress of the cause might require, and supervise the general interests of the church. The bishops were constituted, *ex-officio*, the presiding officers of the quadrennial conferences.

The regular official members of the church, as provided for in the discipline of 1815, are, *stewards, leaders, exhorters, preachers, presiding elders, and superintendents or bishops.*

A *steward* is virtually a New Testament *deacon*, his business being to attend to the financial concerns of a church.

A *class-leader* is a kind of sub-pastor, who has charge of the religious interests of a

certain number of the members of the church, whom he is to meet in class, admonish, comfort, and exhort, as their cases may require. In the absence of the pastor the leader is required to appoint and hold prayer-meetings.

An *exhorter* is one who, believing he has a call to exhort his fellow-men, receives a license to do so.

A *preacher* is a regular minister of the Gospel—known, also, as a presbyter, elder, or bishop.

A *presiding elder* is a minister elected, for a single year at a time, to take the general oversight of a certain number of circuits, missions, or stations.

A *bishop*, in the sense in which the term is used in the discipline, is a minister elected to a general superintendency of the church for a period of four years.

It should be distinctly noticed that but one order of ministers is recognized—that of presbyter or elder, or bishop; these being, in the judgment of the church, convertible terms. In this view of the parity of the Gospel ministry United Brethren are fully sustained by the New Testament. "Paul sends to Ephesus for the elders (*presbyters*)

of the church, and to them he says, 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (*bishops*), to feed the church of God.'—(Acts xx.: 17, 28.) The word bishop is never used in the New Testament to signify the office of oversight over *ministers*, but only over the *flock* of Christ. 'The elders (*presbyters*), which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder (*presbyter*); feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof' (*acting as the bishops thereof*).—(1 Pet. v.: 1, 2.) Bishops and presbyters have the same *qualifications* (Titus i.: 5, 7,) and the same *duties*.—(1 Tim. ii.: 4, 5—v.: 17.)"\*

The itinerant preacher's salary was fixed at \$80,00 for an unmarried, and \$160,00 for a married, man; and this was to be paid,

\* "The Scriptural argument," says Mr. Coleman in his Primitive Church, "for the equality and identity of bishops and presbyters or elders, may be comprised in the following heads:

I. The appellations and titles of a presbyter are used indiscriminately and interchangeably with those of a bishop.

II. A presbyter is required to possess the same qualifications as a bishop.

III. The official duties of a presbyter are the same as those of a bishop.

IV. There was, in the apostolical churches, no ordinary and permanent grade or class of ministers superior to that of presbyters "



in whole or in part, from a common fund raised from all the fields of labor. If A, for example, received \$200,00 on his circuit, and B \$100,00, both sums were put into the conference treasury, and in the end A and B fared alike. Hence, we find in the conference minutes, between 1816 and 1830, settlements like the following:

*Money Received from 1821 to 1822.*

Hagerstown circuit,	-	-	-	\$195	27
Huntington,	-	-	-	52	20
Juniata,	-	-	-	74	92
Virginia,	-	-	-	175	39½
Westmoreland,	-	-	-	59	70
Frederickstown,	-	-	-	63	01

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Total, - - - - \$620 49½

*Money paid out from 1821 to 1822.*

William Brown,	-	-	-	\$124	10
John Brown,	-	-	-	124	10
Daniel Pfeifer,	-	-	-	62	05
Conrad Weist,	-	-	-	62	05
Christian Traub,	-	-	-	62	05
John Brown (of Pa.),	-	-	-	62	05
James Dunnaho,	-	-	-	62	05
Henry Burtner,	-	-	-	62	05

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Total, - - - - \$620 50

Christian Newcomer and Andrew Zeller were elected bishops. This responsibility had been placed upon Mr. Newcomer by the conference in the East, first in 1813, and again in 1814. He had also presided at each session of the Miami conference, from its organization in 1810.

After a session of only four days, the first general conference adjourned.

The discipline prepared was printed at Hagerstown, in the German language only. It contains fifty-five pages.

## CHAPTER III.

IMPOSITION OF HANDS—RISE OF THE CHURCH  
IN INDIANA—SECOND GENERAL CONFERENCE  
—CAMP-MEETINGS—NEW SECTIONS ADDED  
TO THE DISCIPLINE.

THE measures adopted by the first general conference exerted a happy influence upon the church. The discipline agreed upon, and published, was very generally received and approved; and, in all essential features, it has passed the ordeal of eleven general conferences, and stood the test of nearly fifty years.

The delegates went to their homes, not with less good-will toward all men, but with more of the denominational spirit; and the conviction began to prevail, that the United Brethren in Christ were called, not only to break up the hard ground and sow the precious seed, but also to harvest the ripe grain. Unity and confidence, such as had existed under the superintendence of Otterbein, were now in a fair way to supersede the tempo-



rary division and distrust; and, subsequent to the year 1815, the idea of absorption by any other religious body became less and less current. The struggle with adverse influences was not over; but the darkest hour had passed, and to the inquiry, "Watchmen, what of the night?" the more hopeful, discerning the faint twilight in the eastern sky, could reply, "The morning cometh."

On the 27th of June, a few days after the general conference adjourned, the Miami conference convened in Fairfield Co., O. Bishop Newcomer, assisted by A. Hiestand, presided. Twenty-one preachers were in attendance at the opening of the conference; and the session was short and peaceable. Entire satisfaction was expressed with the action of the general conference.

The subject of the greatest interest which came up, related to ORDINATION BY LAYING ON OF HANDS. This subject had been agitated in this conference at its third annual session, in 1813, as the following extracts from its minutes show:

"26th. The mode of ordination was next taken up, as also the manner of receiving a preacher. It is lamented that too little

order has been attended to in receiving preachers, as well as ordaining. The conference, therefore, has taken it into consideration whether it is proper that a preacher should be ordained without the laying on of the hands of an elder.

"27th. After reading, singing, and prayer, took up the subject of ordination. Agreed, that a petition be sent to father Otterbein, requesting him to ordain one or more preachers, by laying on of hands, who may perform the like office for others."\*

A letter, or petition, was accordingly prepared, read before the conference, on the 28th, approved, and sent to Mr. Otterbein, who, in compliance therewith, ordained, by laying on of hands, C. Newcomer, J. Hoffman, and F. Schaffer.†

The general conference of 1815 adopted the views of the Miami conference, and made it a rule that all candidates for the ministry in the United Brethren church, should be inducted into the sacred office by laying on of hands.

In compliance with this rule, the Miami conference, at the session of which we are speaking, by a unanimous vote, presented

\* Miami Conference Journal, pp. 21, 22.

† See a full account of this ordination in Vol. I. pp. 392, 393, 394.

Christian Crum, A. Hiestand, Geo. Benedum, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Troyer, H. Miller, W. P. Smith, and J. G. Pfrimmer, for ordination, by laying on of hands. On the last day of the conference these ministers, that nothing might be wanting in the form of induction into the sacred office, and in obedience to the will of the church, as expressed by its highest court, presented themselves for ordination, according to the solemn and impressive formula which had been agreed upon. First, bishop Newcomer, on whose head had been laid the hands of Otterbein, ordained Christian Crum; after which, assisted by Mr. Crum, he ordained the others.

Amongst those who were thus formally ordained, were several venerable ministers, and one bishop; and it is a fact that Mr. Newcomer, himself, filled the office of superintendent, prior to his ordination by the laying on of hands.

But it would be a blunder to infer that these brethren had not been ordained; and, that they had not exercised, in a lawful manner, all the functions of the ministry. No question as to the *validity* of their ordination had obtained in the minds of the church.\*

\* Mr. Harbaugh, in a sketch of Mr. Otterbein's life, assumes that the United Brethren ministry, up to 1813, was an "abnor-



During a long series of years, candidates for the ministry, in the United Brethren church, after a suitable probation, had been invested with the office and responsibilities of elders; not by the laying on of hands, but by the vote of the conference. This fact is attested by the minutes of the conference in the east, and also by the minutes of the Miami conference. The whole question related to the manner in which ordination should be performed; and a uniform, decent, solemn, and, as some believed, a scriptural mode, was adopted, to which all, including the aged elders, willingly submitted.

Christian churches are not agreed as to the necessity and propriety of this ceremony. Among the Methodists, in England, ordination is performed by prayer, without the imposition of hands.\* "The reformed, generally, hold the call of the people the only thing essential to the validity of the ministry, and teach that ordination is only a ceremony, which renders the call more august and authentic."

mal ministry;" as if the *ceremony* of laying on of hands, were essential to ordination. It is evident, from the stress which Mr. H. places upon this ceremony, that additional information on the subject, would be no disadvantage to him.

\* Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, p. 892.

United Brethren have generally believed that ordination, whether with or without the laying on of hands, is a work committed to elders by divine appointment;\* and the wisdom which induced them to require that all candidates for elders' orders should prove themselves worthy, by a long probation, and a careful examination, and that to the solemn vote of the elders should be added the appropriate and impressive ceremony of laying on the hands, will hardly be questioned.

As early as 1814, John G. Pfrimmer, one of the most distinguished of the German fathers, moved into the territory of Indiana, and lifted up the standard of Immanuel. He located his family near Corydon, in Harrison county, while the country was yet almost an unbroken wilderness; and to him belongs the honor of planting the FIRST UNITED BRETHREN SOCIETIES IN INDIANA.

\* "If the power to ordain is lodged in the people, how happens it that in all the epistles, not a single word is to be found giving *them* any directions about constituting ministers. On the other hand, in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, who were persons in office, we find particular instructions given them to lay hands suddenly on no man, to examine his qualifications before they ordain him, and to take care that they commit the office only to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. There is scarcely a single ecclesiastical writer that does not expressly mention ordination as the work of elders."—*Ency. Rel. Knowl.*

At the Miami conference of 1816, a district, called the "Kentucky and Indiana district," was constituted, of which J. G. Pfrimmer was appointed presiding elder. From this conference, which met in Montgomery county, Ohio, bishop Newcomer made his first tour into Indiana, in company with Mr. Pfrimmer. The country was almost entirely without roads, and, from New Lexington, they were obliged to hire a pilot to conduct them through the forest. Reaching Clark county, Mr. Newcomer writes: "Bless the Lord, this morning I am well, and am determined, by his grace, to do and suffer the will of my heavenly Master. I am now in Clark county, more than a hundred miles west of the State of Ohio. We came, to-day, to an elevated spot of ground whence we had a view all around to a considerable distance; here I humbled myself on my knees, in gratitude to God, who, in mercy, has preserved me in the wilderness to the present time."

We have, in this note, a glimpse of Indiana a little more than forty years ago. Perhaps those venerable fathers, when threading the wilderness, on Indian trails, or blazing their way through the pathless woods,



guided by a compass, could hardly have believed that, in so short a period as forty years, a great State would spring up, and that the United Brethren church, which had then a few feeble societies, would number five strong conferences, and thousands of members.

From 1816 to 1819 but little, comparatively, was done in Indiana, for the want of an efficient itinerant ministry. In 1819, however, the cause began to move forward rapidly under the efficient labors of Jacob Antrim, who was placed that year on White Water circuit, where he gathered hundreds into the church. In 1820 the work was carried on with almost, if not quite, equal success, under the labors of James Ross and A. Shingledecker, who followed Mr. Antrim on White Water circuit. The same year the cause received a still greater impetus, under the labors of John McNamar, who opened an entirely new circuit between Lawrenceburg and Corydon. Pfrimmer, Doup, and J. Evinger, were also engaged on a work along the river, designated as the "Indiana Knobs circuit." In 1821, Mr. Antrim was again sent to Indiana, also William Stubbs, whose labors were greatly blessed. These were fol-

lowed by the Bonebrakes, George and Henry, both strong men, and by J. Mahan, F. Whitcom, A. Farmer, and other efficient laborers. From 1819 to the present time, the United Brethren church in Indiana has had a healthy and rapid growth.

Let us now return to the East. At the annual conference held in Franklin county, Pa., in May, 1815, the subject of camp-meetings came up, was discussed, and a resolution was adopted that such a meeting should be held in the August following, at Rocky Springs, Franklin county, Pa. Accordingly, on the 17th of August, 1815, two months after the general conference, the first camp-meeting ever held by the United Brethren in Christ, was commenced. It continued four days, and was a remarkably good meeting. Bishop Newcomer, who attended, says of it: "The Lord truly was in the camp. Sunday, the 20th, we had a particularly blessed time. A vast concourse of people attended, and many were the slain of the Lord. Many were happily converted, and enabled to return home rejoicing in God their Savior. Glory, honor, and praise, be unto the Lamb forever!" The following year two or three camp-meetings were held by the United

Brethren; and, for a long series of years, these meetings have been a favorite means of grace; and although, as the country grows older, as the facilities for public worship are increased, and as evangelical churches are furnished with better means of reaching the masses of the people, they are going into disuse, yet they are still highly prized in some portions of the church, and especially in Pennsylvania.

Camp-meetings originated among the Presbyterians, in Kentucky, in 1799. While two pious brothers named McGee, John and Charles, were on a tour through that State, they arrived at a settlement where a Presbyterian minister, named McGready, was holding a sacramental meeting. The three ministers (one of the McGees was a Methodist, the other a Presbyterian) labored together at the sacramental meeting, "which was attended with such an outpouring of the Spirit upon the people, that, instead of separating as usual, they continued the meeting. Others from the surrounding country, hearing of the extraordinary indications of the Divine presence, came in; and the meeting was continued several days; the people meantime supplying themselves with pro-



visions, and lodging in covered wagons, huts, and booths. The McGees soon appointed a camp-meeting in an adjoining district, and subsequently another still, both of which were signally owned of God in the salvation of souls.

These grand mass-meetings exerted no inconsiderable influence on the early religious history of this rapidly-growing country. Their excellence, as an evangelizing agency, especially in new countries, or in an old country, where, for the want of houses of worship under the control of evangelical Christians, the masses of the people can not be reached, is apparent. Tens of thousands on earth, and probably millions in heaven, will forever bless the Lord for camp-meetings, and associate the circle of tents, the cool and leafy grove, the rude altar, and preacher's stand, with their espousal to Christ.

The SECOND GENERAL CONFERENCE met in Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland county, Pa., June the 2d, 1817. The members present were: C. Newcomer and Andrew Zeller, *bishops*; A. Meyer, Joseph Hoffman, John Snyder, H. Kumler, sen., Jacob Dehoff, L. Cramer, D. Mechlin, H. G. Spayth, L. Roth, and H. Ow. Bishop Newcomer, assisted by

bishop Zeller, presided, and H. G. Spayth was the secretary.

No changes were made by this conference in the eight sections of discipline adopted in 1815, but five new sections, four of which are found in the present discipline, were added. The first section added relates to the importance of union in the church, and the means of preserving it. The rules laid down, if observed, would always secure the most perfect unity. If Christians felt the necessity of union; if they prayed earnestly for it; if they would never part without prayer; if they honored each other's gifts, and always entertained a sacred regard for each other's reputation, in honor preferring one another, they would indeed be one as the Father and the Son are one.

The second section added relates to pastoral work, and reads as follows:

*Ques.* How can we further assist those under our care?

*Ans.* By instructing them at their own houses, which is necessary to promote confidence and communion with God among us, to wean us from the love of the world, and to inure us to a life of heavenly-mindedness; also, to encourage us to strive after

and practice brotherly love, that no evil thinking or judging of one another be found among us; and lastly, that we may learn to do as we would wish to be done by.

2. Every preacher should make it his duty to instruct the people on every occasion, both public and private; and exhort them to be diligent in all good works and doctrine. Until this be done, and that in sincerity, we shall, upon the whole, be of but little use, and our good shall be evil spoken of; therefore, wherever we may be, we should guard against useless and idle conversation.

Undoubtedly this private application of visiting from house to house, and exhorting the people, is found or implied in these solemn words of the Apostle:

"I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. iv. : 1, 2.

The third new section is supplementary to the preceding, and relates to the instruction of children:



"What shall be done to benefit the rising generation?

"Let him who is in any way zealous for God, and the souls of men, begin the work immediately. Wherever children are found, meet them, as often as possible; speak freely with them, and instruct them diligently; exhort them to be good, and pray with them earnestly, yet simply and plainly, that they may learn to know their Creator and Redeemer in the days of their youth."

The fourth, fifth, and sixth added sections contain forms for the ordination of elders and superintendents, and for the solemnization of marriage. The ordination of bishops was an innovation at variance with a well-established principle of the church. Hence, in 1825 the practice was condemned, and the form swept from the discipline. This was wise and timely.

One new conference was formed, and called the Muskingum. It embraced a small portion of western Pennsylvania, including Westmoreland and Washington counties, and that part of Ohio which lies east and north of the Muskingum river. The territory is a good one; but, at that period, it embraced only a few feeble churches,—no circuits, no

itinerants, and less than a dozen local preachers.

Christian Newcomer and Andrew Zeller were re-elected superintendents.

It was voted that one hundred copies of the discipline should be printed in the English language.

## CHAPTER IV.

SOME OF THE PIONEERS—BENEDUM, ZELLER,  
SPAYTH, KUMLER, TROYER, EVINGER, SMALTZ,  
CRAMER.

To those Christian ministers who, in the beginning of the century, left their comfortable homes in the East, and, on the first tide of emigration, moved westward, that they might establish churches, and feed the sheep of Christ in the wilderness, we all owe a large debt of gratitude. Among the earliest and most efficient of these pioneers in the United Brethren church, were George Benedum and Andrew Zeller. Scarcely had Ohio become a State, when these devoted servants of God bade farewell to their brethren in Pennsylvania, and, taking with them their wives and children, removed to what was then regarded as the "far west." Mr. Benedum settled in Fairfield, and Mr. Zeller in Montgomery county, Ohio; and, probably, to no two men is the church in the



West, and especially in the Miami and Scioto conferences, so much indebted for its early and rapid growth, and present strength and prosperity.

GEORGE BENEDUM, who was among the earlier fruits of the revival of religion in Pennsylvania, was admitted into the conference in 1794, in the 29th year of his age. He was present at the old conference, in 1804, after which time his name disappears from the journal. The precise date of his removal to the west has not been obtained, but it must have been as early as 1806; and it is certain that he was one of the first United Brethren evangelists in Ohio. Immediately after his settlement in the Scioto Valley, he lifted up the standard of the cross, around which many of the early settlers were persuaded to rally. Amongst those who were won to Christ, during the earlier years of his labors in the west, we find the names of several who afterward became useful ministers. Of these it will be sufficient to name D. Mechlin, Lewis Cramer, John Smaltz, and bishop Samuel Hiestand. He assisted in the organization of the Miami conference, in 1810, and was

a member of the first, third, fifth, and sixth general conferences.

“Mr. Benedum\* possessed first rate natural endowments. His apprehension was quick, judgment accurate, imagination fertile; and, though no one had a nicer discrimination of the excellencies or defects of a performance, yet his diffidence, and the tenderness of his heart, generally repressed the utterance of a criticism. He knew no luxury so great as the reading of the Bible. As often as I have been at his house, I never saw him read any other book. He was a man of one book. When at meetings, although other books might lie before him on the table, he would take out his Bible and pore over its sacred pages. He received the Bible as a direct revelation. Other books might contain truth, but it comes second hand. In other books the water may be roiled; in the Bible it is always clear; or, to change the figure, we find, in the sacred volume, the clean grain, without chaff or chaff.

“As a teacher of the young, Mr. Bene-

\* This sketch is from the pen of BISHOP RUSSEL, who was long Mr. Benedum's intimate friend.

dum was mild and genial as the rays of a spring sun, yet he did not lack firmness. As a helper to young preachers, none surpassed him. He heard their prayers and discourses with tenderness; his countenance beamed with pleasure when he discovered indications of talent and of improvement; he was slow to reprove, ready to encourage, and kept before their minds the importance of personal religion, and dependence on God.

"As a minister, Mr. Benedum was a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God; and, like a householder, he brought forth out of his treasure things new and old. He had, as may be inferred from what has been said, a vast fund of Scriptural and experimental knowledge. Few furnished, in their sermons, so great a variety of important truths. The principles he taught were those he himself had learned from the word of God.

"I imagine I see him now standing before his audience, having his Bible on the palm of his hand, and with the other bearing on it, and that I hear his clear, shrill voice, as he cries,—

"'Brethren, I exult in the word of God!' He did not always harp upon two or three



topics, or, like some mis-educated men, go around through the field of Gospel truth like a horse in a tread-mill. He employed, in his preaching, both the expository and topical methods. His manner, in the pulpit and out of it, was grave and becoming. He was master of the German language, and was never at a loss for the proper word.

"I could not remain in his company without realizing something of the innocence and purity of the paradisiacal state. I have heard many pray, but never one like father Benedum.

"I was present when he formed the first regular class on Pleasant Run, in 1818. His invitation for members so captivated the people, that they pressed around him in crowds, giving him their hands, weeping and shouting. At a camp-meeting on Pleasant Run, I heard him preach a sermon before the sacrament, on Isaiah liii. : 12; and such was the profundity of thought, and such the power of the Holy Ghost in the sermon, that it seemed to me that heaven and earth were coming together!"

Bishop Edwards remarked to the writer that, although he could not understand a

sentence of the German language, yet he always became happy under his preaching. He traveled and preached much, receiving but a trifling pecuniary consideration; and when death came, on the 27th of March, 1837, he met it with a smile. His exit was happy. The light of his life shone undimmed to the last. He died in his 72d year, after having preached forty-three years. His body sleeps at Baltimore, Fairfield county, Ohio.

ANDREW ZELLER entered into the service of God about the year 1790. As early as 1806 he settled in the Miami Valley, near Germantown, Montgomery county, where he immediately began to build up the kingdom of Christ. He assisted in organizing the first conference in Ohio; served several years as presiding elder; was a delegate to the first general conference, in 1815, where he was elected bishop, which office he filled, with entire acceptability, for a period of six years. His good sense, deep piety, and liberality, contributed greatly to the prosperity of the cause of Christ, especially in the Miami Valley, where his influence will be perpetuated to the end of time.

Bishop Zeller, as he appeared at four-

score, is described as a little above the medium height, and remarkably straight; hair white, and, on the top of his head, thin; eyes grey and full, and skin very fair. To the last year of his life he walked perfectly erect, and with a quick and measured step.

As a preacher, he was mild, plain, and evangelical; and this much may be said of many other men; but of Mr. Zeller it must be added, that his *life* was a sermon. There was something in the expression of his countenance which sometimes sent conviction to the sinner's heart. As an illustration of the hallowed personal influence that attended him, and expressed itself often when he was silent, Mr. Spayth relates an anecdote, which came under his own observation:

"While on his official tour in 1815, he had to have a small piece of work done, in the town of M——. The mechanic was a worthy man, but would attend no church, nor hear preaching. While doing the work, he cast a heedless look at brother Zeller, who stood not far away, with his hands folded before him. The man looked the second and the third time, but with feelings which had begun to steal on him for which



he could not account. Another look, and an arrow shot through his breast. From that moment he had no rest (the stranger stood ever before him, with folded hands, and, as he thought, praying to God for his poor soul), till God spoke peace to him. That man has, ever since, been a consistent Christian. How many splendid sermons are preached which are followed by no conversions."

"What a contrast," adds Mr. Spayth, "between what men call great preachers, and those God approves. One hears the echo of applause; the other is followed by a train of happy souls bound to meet him in heaven. We now see through a glass, darkly; fleeting visions pass before and around us, which will prove happy realities when the vail shall be lifted, and we shall see the saints who are the joy and diadem of the true minister, reflecting the light of Jesus Christ."

This venerable bishop and pioneer evangelist died on the 25th of May, 1839, in the 84th year of his age. The Miami conference, which had held a number of its earlier annual meetings at his house, was in session at Germantown, at the time of his

decease. To his brethren who visited him he expressed a great longing for the heavenly state. When the hand of death was upon him, he was asked if he thought his last hour had come. He replied, with evident pleasure—"I hope so;" and then he folded his arms, and, without a struggle, calmly fell asleep in Jesus. How sweet to die, after half a century of unremitting devotion to the Lord's cause.

In the year 1812, at the conference which met at the Antietam, the name of HENRY G. SPAYTH first appears upon the minutes; and he was that year received into the itineracy, and directed to spend the latter part of the year in Virginia. In 1813 he was appointed to a circuit in Maryland. In 1814 he received "license to baptize, to solemnize marriage, and to assist in administering the Lord's Supper;" and was placed on the Rockingham circuit, now within the bounds of the Virginia conference.

About the year 1815, he removed to Mt. Pleasant, Pa., where, for the want of an adequate salary, he supported his family, in part, by teaching school. He stood high, at that early period, in the esteem of his brethren, and was sent to the first general con-

ference, in which body he exerted an important influence. At the moment when a rupture in that body seemed inevitable, and the powers of darkness were ready to shout a victory, Mr. S. arose and delivered an address, which, with the prayer-meeting that followed, resulted in a complete restoration of good feeling, and a most happy termination of the difficulties.\*

He was also a member of the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth general conferences. Being a man of discriminating intellect and strong will, and possessing superior tact as a speaker and writer, he exerted, in all those conferences, a very considerable influence. Perhaps few men did more to shape the polity of the church from 1815 to 1845—a period of thirty years.

He was a member of the Muskingum conference in its infancy, and, as early as 1821, served in it as a presiding elder. As there were few itinerant laborers in the conference, the work of the ministry devolving mainly upon those who are now regarded as local preachers, his duties as a presiding

\* This fact was given to the writer by an aged layman of Pennsylvania.



elder required frequent and long journeys, and much severe labor.

Removing to Tiffin, Ohio, about the time the Sandusky conference was organized, he became identified with that body, and has ever since remained a respected and active member. The general conference of 1845 appointed him chairman of a committee, George Hiskey and William Hanby being the other members, to revise the hymn-book of the church. The book prepared gives evidence of excellent taste in the compilers; and, had they not been required to prepare a small book, it is not probable that the work would very soon have been superceded.

At the general conference of 1841, it was resolved "that our aged fathers, J. Hoffman, John Hildt, D. Troyer, A. Hiestand, J. Baulus, H. G. Spayth, J. Neiding, C. Hershey of Pa., J. Yordy, G. Guething, W. Ambrose, J. Hershey of Md., B. Lawman, C. Smith, J. Dehoff, H. Kumler, J. Sneider, V. Daub, and H. Ow, be requested to furnish, to a committee, all the facts in their possession in relation to the rise, etc., of the United Brethren in Christ in America." It was further agreed that C. Smith, J. Erb,

and J. Russel, be a committee to receive the materials furnished, and prepare a history of the church for publication. The history did not appear. Nothing, in fact, was done toward it; and, at the general conference of 1845, the subject came up again, when Mr. Spayth was appointed to prepare the desired work for publication. The task, which was by no means an easy one, was not completed until 1851.

In this work Mr. Spayth's best qualities of head and heart are displayed. He exhibits a discriminating knowledge of the causes which led to the rise of the church, and of the venerable men who, as the agents of the Lord, laid its foundation, and, for a long series of years, built thereon the gold, the silver, and the precious stones.

As a preacher, Mr. S. is always instructive to the cultivated hearer; but he generally fails to interest the masses. In a few instances, however, he has been known to move large congregations as the storm-swept forest is moved. In one of these happy moods he preached at Kimberlin's in 1843:—Text:—"What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man, that thou visitest him." Those who heard him

then will always remember the occasion as one of the happiest of their lives. Many years since, he preached under the influence of this divine afflatus near Fremont, Ohio. Text, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew,—as the small rain upon the tender herb,—as the showers upon the grass."—Deut. xxxii.: 2. Years afterward, when the writer traveled in that section of the country, he heard this sermon referred to as one of remarkable beauty and power.

After a service in the ministry of half a century, Mr. Spayth preserves the full force of his intellect, walks erect, takes an active part in the business of the conference to which he belongs, and maintains a lively interest in the church, and in the cause of the Redeemer in the world.

We will now introduce to the reader a name which is as ointment poured forth, wherever the United Brethren in Christ are known. We refer to HENRY KUMLER, sen.\* Mr. Kumler's ancestors were from Switzerland. He was born in Pennsylvania, January 3d, 1775. His convictions for sin date

\* This sketch is mainly an abridgment from an autobiography published in *Unity Magazine*, Vol. I.



back to his seventh year. After passing through the usual catechetical course, he was received into the German Reformed church, in Greencastle, Pa. A large portion of his experience must be given in his own words. "I became more careless," he writes, "until the year 1811, when I was in my barn one day, and the Spirit of God entered my heart. With great astonishment I looked upon my youthful days, knowing that God had often called me, and that I had just as often promised to live for him. With tears I cried out 'O my God, how good thou art!' The compassion of God filled me with amazement. Light sprung up in my mind. I was as well convinced that this was the last call, as I could have been by an audible voice. \* \* My distress was great. I abandoned my work, and sought a secret place to pray. I was determined never to cease the struggle until I had obtained mercy. I passed eleven days in this condition; and as I was alone in my barn, at prayer, in the evening, my heart was so filled with the love of God that I could no longer restrain myself. I ran to the house, and spoke to my wife of the great necessity

of our souls' salvation. That evening we had family worship for the first time."

Soon after Mr. Kumler's conversion, he was the means of the salvation of others; and, the news being spread abroad, some United Brethren and Evangelical ministers visited him, and preached at his house; not, however, on the hours of public worship in the German Reformed church, to which he belonged. This fact, together with the prayer and speaking meetings in which he participated, excited the displeasure of his pastor, and "one Sunday," says Mr. K., "he preached a sermon for me. He called those people who pray in public Pharisees, and said they open their windows so that the people may hear them pray. His gun was well charged, and he hurt my feelings very much. His drunken, card-playing, gambling, and dancing hearers, were very much pleased with the discourse, and laughed, looking at me; and, as the congregation retired, one of this class hunched me, and asked if I knew for whom the sermon was preached. I made no reply, but went home and wrote the minister a letter, in which I informed him that I could get no sense out of his sermon; that

he knew the Scriptures better than I, since I was only an ignorant farmer; and that he had, doubtless, read where Christ commands us to let our light shine, and not hide it under a bushel; also, the passage in David, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' \* \* Finally, I gave him a receipt how to keep his members, which was to this effect,—that he should take away every prop, and give them no rest until, like Mary, they were found at Jesus' feet. When he read the letter, he first made an insulting remark, but, upon further reflection, sent for me to visit him immediately. I went; and, as I entered the room, he said—

"Never in your life undertake to write to a preacher again."

"Why not?"

"Because when you only say a thing, and find that you are cornered, then you can say, I did not mean so, and you can construe it into another shape."

"What I have written I have written."

This conversation took place while I was yet standing. He then said, drawing the letter out of his pocket,—



"Well, come and sit down. What do you understand by letting your light shine?"

"To let my light shine, is to show by my life, before God and man, that I am determined to lead another life."

"Oh, that is well enough."

"But I believe that a man like me, who has such a large family, should speak to, and exhort his family, and pray with them."

"That is well enough."

"There was a man living with me in my house, and we lived in peace together, but not as Christians. He is now moved, and lives ten or twelve miles from here, and I had no rest until I went to him. I staid over night; sang and prayed with him in the evening before we went to bed, and also in the morning. The man broke out in moaning and tears, crying, 'God have mercy on me, a sinner!'

"That was all well enough," said my minister, as he rolled up the letter and put it in his pocket.

"Yes," said I, "God be praised, I went on my way rejoicing; and whosoever will may call it hypocrisy and pharisaism."

"The sermon I preached last Sunday," said he, "I should not have preached, had

not less than three come to me and said, 'You will lose Kumler.' "

Thus ended the interview, and Mr. K.'s connection with the G. R. church. The young farmer, sitting before the learned divine, explaining to him what is meant by letting the light shine, affords a fine subject for the pencil of the artist.

Soon Mr. K. felt it his duty to exhort at the prayer-meetings; and, in 1813, he was received into the conference at Hagerstown, Md. The next year the conference was held at his house. In 1815 he was a delegate to the first general conference of the church. In 1816 he became an itinerant, and traveled in Virginia, having J. Dehoff for a colleague. His circuit required 370 miles travel every four weeks. In 1817 he was made presiding elder. This was to him a year of excessive labor, and great bodily and mental affliction, all of which God so sanctified to his good, that he was enabled by grace to take a higher stand, spiritually, than ever before. During these years of itinerant labor in the East he won many souls to Christ. In 1819 he emigrated to Ohio, and settled in the Miami country. In 1825 he was elected bishop, and was re-elected in

1829, 1833, 1837, 1841. During the first eight years of his superintendency he crossed the Alleghanies (not by rail-road) eighteen times. Mr. Spayth, who was present at his first election to the superintendency, relates that "the thought had never entered his mind, and no suggestion of the kind had been made to him by any member of the general conference. When the counting of the ballots was commenced, and his name was announced, he covered his face with his hands, and wept; and when the result was pronounced, he was still weeping and trembling with emotion. A pause in the business of conference ensued; heads were bowed, faces were covered; and for perhaps ten minutes no one presumed to speak."

In person, bishop Kumler was neat and comely. His countenance was open and pleasant, denoting great cheerfulness and much thought. His mind was well balanced. Mild and even in his temper, he yet possessed sufficient firmness to render him prompt and thorough-going in all that he undertook. His heart seemed to be a fountain of cheerfulness, and his conversation was richly spiced with little pleasantries. His liberality is not easily excelled. He preached with ease to himself,

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but with much feeling, interspersing his sermons with incidents that would touch the heart of the hearer, almost before he was aware of it. "With him," says Mr. Spayth, "preaching was an agony for souls." His manner was winning, and affectionate; and although he preached in German, those who did not understand his words would frequently be melted to tears under his discourses.

On Sabbath evening, January 8th, 1854, after a brief illness, he went to his reward, aged 79, having served the Lord as a minister, forty-one years. Such was another of the men, raised up by the Lord, to supply the vacancy created by the removal of Guething, Boehm, and Otterbein.

DANIEL TROYER, who deserves a high place among the pioneers, was born in Maryland, in 1769. When yet quite a young man, he heard a sermon preached by Mr. Newcomer, which awakened a sufficient religious interest in his mind to induce him to attend a sacramental meeting at the Antietam. Mr. Otterbein was at the meeting, and preached an impressive sermon; and after the sacrament was administered, he invited all who desired the prayers of God's people, to come forward

and give him their hands. Many arose and went forward, weeping, and among the number was young Troyer. He left the meeting a deeply convicted sinner; and, reaching home, went to the barn to pray. But, as he kneeled down, and began to pray, he imagined that he heard the roof of the barn giving way, and that it was just ready to fall in and crush him. Leaving the barn in terror, he hastened to the grove, where he fell upon his knees, at the root of a great tree, and wrestled in prayer until he obtained the blessing. He soon began to call sinners to repentance, and as early as 1806, emigrated to Ohio, and settled in the Miami Valley. He was a member of the Miami conference, at its organization in 1810, and, in 1812, willingly gave himself up to travel as an itinerant preacher. The same year he was appointed by the Miami conference as a messenger to the Methodist conference, which met in Chillicothe. He was a member of the first general conference, where he made a favorable impression upon the minds of his brethren. A wise and prudent man, and a faithful Christian, his influence has always been wholesome. "As a preacher," writes Mr. G. Bonebrake, he "was, in his earlier years, a

man of power. He had a very strong voice, and great zeal; and at large meetings, when it became necessary to divide the congregation, the people would generally ask, 'Where will Bro. Troyer preach?' And on such occasions he always had his full share of the hearers." Fathers Troyer and Spayth are the only surviving members of the first general conference.

HENRY EVINGER was one of the first itinerant preachers in Ohio; was a member of the Miami conference at its organization; and, in 1812, became an itinerant. That year he traveled Twin creek circuit, Thomas Winter being his colleague. They reported, at the conference in 1813, forty-seven appointments, and Mr. Evinger's salary was \$53 51½. During the year 1814, in connection with Mr. Winter, he compiled a German hymn-book, which was laid before the Miami conference; but action in regard to its publication was deferred until after the general conference, then near at hand, should meet. As Mr. Winter withdrew from the church before the book was printed, the task of completing it devolved wholly upon Mr. Evinger. It was published in 1815. Mr. E. was a member of the third general conference. He died in Illinois.



DEWALT MECHLIN was also a member of the first annual conference in Ohio. He was not an itinerant preacher,—not a great preacher, but a remarkably zealous man; and for many years his house was a rallying point for the church.

“He stood as a faithful minister of the church for many years. His peculiar gift was exhortation—scarcely ever did he take a text. We have often heard him say that if he had any gift it was in exhortation. It is due to the memory of this good man to say that he was, under God, a great blessing to the church—having labored and traveled much, without any pecuniary reward whatever.

“Father Mechlin departed this life July 30th, 1838, at the going down of the sun. He had been assisting his children, through the course of the day, in making hay. He ate breakfast, dinner, and supper, in usual health. After supper he went to his meadow, and while in the act of raking he fell as the mown grass before the scythe, and immediately expired.”\* He was a member of the general conference of 1825.

JOHN SMALTZ entered the ministry in 1812,

\* W. Hanby, History U. B. in Christ, p. 258.

and, for a period of thirty-five years, labored faithfully in winning souls. He preached in the German language only. His zeal abated not in the least as old age crept upon him; and his sermons and exhortations, after he had reached his three-score years, were full of unction and power. His life was an argument for Christianity, which no skepticism could gainsay. He, like many of the early German ministers, imitated Abraham's hospitality. On the 1st of July, 1847, and in the 71st year of his age, he died at his residence in Fairfield Co., O.

L. CRAMER deserves a place among the German fathers who laid the foundations of the church in Ohio. He was a member of the first conference in the west; also of the general conference of 1821. "He labored thirty-five years in the ministry, as opportunity served. Like many of the German fathers, he labored and traveled much, without pecuniary reward for his services. The Lord blessed him with a goodly share of worldly goods, and he proved himself a faithful steward. Notwithstanding he labored free of charge, he was always ready with his means, to assist the poor and needy. His house always proved a home to the way-

worn pilgrim."\* He died September 17th, 1847.

Associated with these, and other pioneer ministers, were pioneer laymen,—brethren and sisters,—who were worthy of such leaders. It is not possible to speak of them particularly; but, in considering the rise and progress of the church, the fact must not be overlooked, that its success, under God, after all that may be said of the ministers, was largely owing to the pious, zealous, firm, and large-hearted laymen, who opened their houses and barns for preaching, spread their tables for the support of large meetings, and trained up children who love the Lord, and the doctrine and discipline of the church.

\* W. Hanby, History United Brethren Church.



## CHAPTER V.

CONFERENCE OF 1818—THE MORNING BREAK-  
ING—RE-INFORCEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY—  
BROWN, RUSSEL, HUBER, DEHOFF.

IN the year 1789 the first regular conference was held; twenty years afterward the Miami was organized, and in 1818 the Muskingum held its first annual session. Let us glance at the annual conferences of 1818.

The old conference was attended by twenty-nine ministers. The subject of the greatest interest which came before it, related to the extension of Christ's kingdom in the west. A letter from the west, spreading before the conference the vast field inviting evangelical labor, and the sacrifices and poverty of the laborers, stirred the missionary fire in the hearts of the brethren; and they resolved to make public efforts to raise means to aid the cause in Ohio and Indiana. This missionary movement was not without valuable results. From the year 1818 onward, contributions flowed from the east to the west;

not in large sums, it is true, nevertheless they kept many an efficient laborer from abandoning the field.

The second annual conference of the year, was the Muskingum, set off from the old conference the year before. Its territory included all that part of Ohio which lies east and north of the Muskingum river, and a small portion of western Pennsylvania, including the counties of Westmoreland and Washington. At the organization of the conference only six ministers residing within this extensive territory were present. Their names follow: Abraham Forney, Matthias Bortsfield, Joseph Gundy, Christian Knagi, Jacob Winter, and John Crum. These six ministers, together with the two bishops, and J. G. Pfrimmer, J. A. Lehman, and J. Antrim, as visitors, met at Joseph Naftzgar's, in Harrison Co., O., June 1st, 1818, to organize the MUSKINGUM CONFERENCE.

The week prior to the conference a camp-meeting was held on Mr. Bortsfield's land, not far from Mr. Naftzgar's, in a notice of which bishop Newcomer says:

"I was astonished to see so many people, and could not conceive where, in this new country, they could come from. The grace

of God wrought powerfully among the people." The reader has noticed, no doubt, that the United Brethren fathers usually went into the conference room fresh from the labors and the joys of a great meeting.

At the opening of the conference, bishop Newcomer spoke of the weighty responsibility of the ministerial office, of the fall and depravity of man, and of the necessity of pardon, and of the *knowledge* of pardon. "Brotherly love," says the minutes, "united the hearts of the little band," and they "*resolved to build the kingdom of Christ under the blessing of the Lord.*" What better or more appropriate resolution could have been adopted by a new conference? Not to build up a church, merely; to obtain a name and a place in the earth did thy resolve; but to "build the kingdom of Christ."

It is a sublime spectacle to behold those six German ministers, without patronage, with little education, and depending almost wholly on the products of their little farms in the woods for a subsistence, "resolving to build the kingdom of Christ." And they did build, and God owned their work!

The third and remaining conference of the year, the Miami, convened at Frey's, in War-



ren Co., June 16th. Twenty-one preachers, including the two bishops, were in attendance. The names of absent members do not appear in the minutes. During the conference, A. Shingledecker, John McGary, and one or two other English preachers, together with several German preachers and exhorters, were received on trial. J. Antrim, who, for many years, was a remarkably successful evangelist, principally in English communities, also received a license to exhort. Up to this time the itinerancy in this conference had been in a very imperfect condition. The year preceding, only McNamar, Lehman, and Wheeler, had traveled, and the sum total which each received on his field of labor, foots up thus: McNamar, \$56 00; Lehman, \$38 84; Wheeler, \$30 00. To these sums were added, as a contribution from the east, \$46 60.

It may be well to apprise the reader that we are approaching the dawn of A BRIGHTER DAY, in the history of the United Brethren church. True, there never was a year, from the conversion of Mr. Ottetbein, to 1820, when the labors of the German fathers were not crowned with the conversion of numerous souls; yet, from causes already noticed,

not only was no *progress* made in numbers from 1810 to 1820, but, undoubtedly, there was a retrocession. Some of these adverse causes began to exert a less potent influence after the first general conference; but it was not until about the year 1820, or 1821, that it became evident that the church was rising above them all, and, under the smiles of heaven, entering again upon a career of prosperity.

It has already been noticed that one of the most pressing wants of the church during this period, was an efficient itinerant ministry,—and, in the west especially, an English-speaking itinerant ministry. Between 1816 and 1822, the Lord of the harvest sent forth a class of laborers who, under the blessing of heaven, and in conjunction with others already in the work, not only succeeded in arresting the retrograde movement, but in adding largely to the numbers and strength of the church. To a few of these recruits, the reader will be introduced in this and in the succeeding chapter.

One hundred years ago, Michael Brown emigrated from Alsace, France, to Pennsylvania. He settled in the beautiful valley of the Tulpehocken, and, with his wife, was

among the first fruits of the revival movement, under the joint labors of Otterbein and Boehm. In 1796, a grandson of this German immigrant was born in Cumberland Co., Pa., in a place remote from any evangelical church. In his seventh year, this little boy stood by the bedside of his dying grandfather. The aged patriarch, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, talked and exhorted till the place became as the very gate of heaven; and as the old man died, his hand rested upon the head of the weeping grandchild by his side; and from that hour that child's heart was drawn toward God and heaven. Often, on Sunday mornings, he would take his Bible, retire to some solitary spot in the hills, and spend hours in reading; and while thus employed, his face would be wet with tears.

There were ministers and church members in the neighborhood where this boy's parents resided, but they were of the kind who drank liquor, led careless lives, and knew little or nothing of experimental religion. Occasionally, however, George Benedum and Abraham Mayer visited the Brown family; and those visits were as the visits of angels, not only to the parents, but to the children; and



especially to the boy whose heart had seemed to go up to heaven with the ascending spirit of his grandfather. During the conference year, which included portions of 1811 and 1812, the devoted evangelist, John Crider, frequently visited the family, and while holding a class-meeting at Mr. B.'s house, he went to the youth, already noticed, and said:

"William," for that was his name, "do you love the Savior and pray to him?"

"I often try," he replied, "but God will not hear me."

From that time young William was known, publicly, as a seeker of religion; and in May 1812, at a big meeting at Abraham Mayer's barn, near Carlisle, he was happily converted. "Now heaven," to use his own language, "shone all around me, and right through my heart. I was happy, day and night, for months. Often, after all had retired at night, would I walk out, look up into the starry heavens, and think of Jesus and heaven, until, before I was aware of it, I would be running, with outstretched arms, praying to Jesus to give me wings to fly home to glory."

After a few years came manhood, the call to preach; and, in 1816, his first license was

granted at a conference held at Daniel Long's, Cumberland Co., Pa. Such was the early history of WILLIAM BROWN, one of the most effective of the early itinerants in the United Brethren church. In 1816 he assisted other itinerant ministers on their fields. In 1817 he was placed on Hagerstown circuit. In 1818-19 he traveled Virginia circuit, which included about thirty appointments and required 300 miles travel every four weeks. During these two years he had great success, and the cause, under his labors, was gloriously advanced. He was a member of the general conference in 1821, and in 1833 was elected bishop, which office he filled acceptably for a period of four years.

JOHN RUSSEL,\* who entered the ministry in 1818, was born on Pipe creek, Md., March 18th, 1799. His ancestors were German. "His grandfather came to this country in 1756, and was converted soon after his arrival, probably through the instrumentality of the Moravians; and, in a letter to a brother in Europe, he wrote: 'Here I have learned to pray for the pardon of my sins, and for a pure heart, and a right spirit. Oh, how

\* This sketch is partly abridged from an article by Rev. J. Dickson, in *Unity Magazine*, Vol. III.

I have longed for Jesus to redeem me from my trouble, which God has granted unto me by inward experience.' His parents were pious. In his younger years he was full of his pranks, fond of fun, indulged in social gatherings, and soon became a fun-maker. The buoyancy of his youthful propensities for a while broke through all restraint, till one evening, returning from a youthful gathering, to which he had gone contrary to the wishes of his parents, his mind was so seized with remorse that he hastened home, rushed into his mother's room, confessed his errors, and made promise of amendment. His determination was now formed, and he continued pressing his suit at the court of heaven, till the work was accomplished. He became a new man in Christ Jesus." "I would pray as well as I knew how," said he, relating his experience. "I would sometimes use prayer-books, until at length, under an apple tree, my troubled spirit was comforted. Gladness so filled my soul that I ran to my mother, telling her what I had obtained. \* \* I experienced such a power I thought I must tell every body how good I felt."

The conversion of young Russel led to



happy results in the neighborhood. Prayer-meetings were started, at which he would read the Scriptures, and exhort; and many other persons, through these means, were converted. As a means of livelihood, he had served an apprenticeship to blacksmithing.\*

His master leaving the neighborhood, Mr. R.'s father bought him a set of tools, and an old colored man to blow and strike, and put him to work. It soon became evident that God intended him for the ministry. His exhortations came with power; sinners quailed under the fervor of his appeals, and his labors in the vineyard of the Lord were far more successful than those of the smith-shop.

\* \* \* The colored man was set free (not sold), the shop was abandoned, and Mr. Russel, then in his nineteenth year, was received into conference. His first license was granted at Christian Hershey's, in 1818; and he was taken by bishop Newcomer to Virginia, and placed on a circuit. "We had," he writes, "glorious times. Bless God, his hand bore me through." His next circuit was located principally in Pennsylvania. Its

\* It is a fact, worth mentioning perhaps, that all the present superintendents of the United Brethren church, learned trades in their youth. Glossbrenner was a silversmith, Edwards a carder and fuller, Davis a machinist, and Russel a blacksmith.

boundaries are described as follows: "Starting at Hagerstown, Md., thence to Greencastle, Chambersburg, Carlisle, Shiremanstown, Wormleysburg, up the Conodoguinet, crossing the mountain at Sterret's Gap, into Sherman's valley, out to Finn's ridge, Buffalo valley, Path valley, Turkey valley, Amberson's valley, and back to Hagerstown, what is now embraced in nine circuits and stations in Pennsylvania conference, a part of the Alleghany conference, and a small portion of Virginia conference." It may be added, that during his labors on this circuit, his horse broke down, and rather than give up the work, he traveled on foot, being obliged sometimes to travel all night, and wade the streams, in order to reach his appointments.

Moved by the pressing calls from the west for ministerial help, in May 1819 Mr. Russel set out for Ohio. He was received into the Miami conference the same year, and placed upon Lancaster circuit; and, for a period of eighteen years, he was intimately associated with the cause in the west. In 1829 he was sent as a delegate to the general conference. In 1830 he was elected presiding elder, which office he filled for several years. When the Sandusky conference was

organized, in 1834, he was elected its first presiding elder. His labors in that conference, however, were brief. He was among the first to perceive the necessity of the press, as an adjunct to the pulpit; and in 1834, in conjunction with Jonathan and George Dresback, he purchased a press to start the enterprise. So fully was he committed to the project, that his property was sold, and the entire proceeds invested in the infant establishment.

In the general conferences of 1833, 1841, and 1845, he was an influential delegate; and at the last named conference he was elected to the office of bishop. He was re-elected to the office in 1857.

The accession of Mr. Russel to the itinerant ministry of the United Brethren church, in 1818, was of great importance. It was during the period of transition from the German to the English; and Mr. Russel, while speaking the German "with a correctness and fluency seldom equaled," was always listened to with delight when he preached in English. And, what is of greater importance, he was an uncompromising opponent of pride, intemperance, secrecy, and slavery; and the influence he exerted upon the polity and prog-



ress of the church, during the years which elapsed between 1820, and 1845, can scarcely be duly estimated now.\*

SAMUEL HUBER was born January 31st, 1782. His parents were members of the Mennonite society; and at their house Otterbein, Boehm, Guething, and others of the fathers, preached. Under the preaching of Jos. Hoffman, in the fourteenth year of his age, Mr. Huber was first convicted of sin, but he was not converted until 1813. He was then settled in life, and residing in a community where vital religion was little known. Soon after his conversion, as he was sitting on his porch on Sabbath morning, observing the young people of the neighborhood engaged in sinful amusements, he said to his wife:

"Do you think that God is satisfied with us sitting here, doing nothing for his cause, while so many are running to ruin in the neighborhood through their wickedness?" She answered,

"What will we do? We can not prevent them doing so." He said,

\* Mr. Dickson relates the following: "A custom somewhat characteristic of the man, and which afterward contributed much toward molding the sentiment of the church on secret orders, was, at their camp-meetings and other great meetings, to publicly invite all ministers into the stand, except those connected with the Freemasons."

"If God spares me until to-morrow morning I intend to go to Chambersburg, and see if I can get a converted man to come here to hold meetings, and talk to the people. I don't want an unconverted one. We have too many of that kind of religionists in the neighborhood already. We want a man who has been converted, and enjoys true religion, and can preach from his own experience."

Jacob Braiser, an elder in the German Reformed church, residing in Chambersburg, was visited, and induced to open meetings at Mr. H.'s house. Soon the work of reformation was commenced, and Mr. H. began to exhort. In 1816 he was received into the conference, and in 1819 was ordained, and elected presiding elder.

A few extracts from his Autobiography, will throw some light upon the manner in which the work of evangelization was carried forward, during the early period of the history of the church, as well as illustrate the character of Mr. H. as a preacher.

"In 1816 a request was made to conference to send a preacher to Tuckaho Valley, Pa. The lot fell upon brother John Bear and myself. Passing through Huntingdon county, to Sinking Valley, we arrived

in Tuckaho Valley, and tarried to preach at brother Buttenberger's. These strange preachers were regarded as a phenomenon. Some people looked at us with terrified glances, afraid to come into the house, but stood gaping in at the windows. After eyeing us for some time, it was discovered that we looked just like other men. We invited them into the house. After some hesitation they began to enter. The house became crowded. Brother Bear preached, after which I followed with exhortation. The word took effect. Some were deeply wounded. One woman, a Lutheran preacher's wife, got under conviction, and prayed earnestly.

"Next day we went to Warrior's Mark, and preached there. Returning home, we preached at the several appointments we had made on our outward route. These appointments extended eighty-five miles from where we started to the Alleghany Mountains. For about two years' time, the Lord wrought such works among the people, that preaching places were opened in such numbers, in these parts, that we could not fill them. A circuit was then formed for two preachers.

"During these times a new preaching place was opened at Mr. Conrad's, at the



iron works, near Warrior's Mark. Brother David Bear, Henry Troub, and myself, on our way to the Furnace, were informed that an appointment had been made for us there. When we arrived at the place, there was a wedding party in waiting. Brother Troub solemnized the marriage. There was meeting in the evening. I preached. The Holy Spirit wrought powerfully. Seven of the wedding party fell as men slain in battle, crying out for mercy, and were married to the Lamb of God. Afterward the manager of the iron works requested brother Troub to preach regularly in that place, a meeting-house having been erected there. The work of God continued to progress through the valley, and extended to the environs of Bellefonte. This was the commencement of the United Brethren preaching in that region of country.

"Next morning brother Bear and myself started homeward, through Aughwick Valley, where we had left an appointment on our way out. At this place there lived a Mr. H. Kimberlin. The meeting was held at brother Aue's house. Kimberlin was a very wicked man indeed. He came to our meeting; and, during its

continuance, became awakened to a sense of his lost state. He requested us to come to his house and baptize his wife and children. We went. I told them 'that baptism alone would not save their souls, but that they must seek for the spiritual baptism, by getting their souls converted.' He promised that, if I would baptize them, this should be a beginning with him, and he would seek the Lord and lead a new life. I complied with his request. I sang and prayed with them, and left for home.

"About one year after this, brother Crider, my colleague, and myself, went to the same place to preach. In an experience meeting, Kimberlin and his wife related their experience, stating what God had done for them by converting their souls. He said that he felt it to be his duty, as he had been so great a sinner, and God had been so merciful to him, to spend his future life in his Master's cause in a public way. He became a zealous and useful preacher of the Gospel.

"The next appointment we had was filled by brother John Crider, in brother Rumberger's barn. Now, brother Rumberger was one of those men who did not want to

work without being paid, although he would sometimes labor on trust. Not knowing whether he would be remunerated or not, having somehow or other understood that there is a promise on record, that 'whosoever receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward,' and being somewhat religiously inclined, he took it into his head to try the Lord, and see whether his promises were true or not. So he went to work and fitted up his barn in good style for the use of these new prophets, which cost him considerable labor and expense. Accordingly, the meeting was held in the barn, and at this meeting brother Rumberger, his wife, son, and daughter, obtained religion, and went on their way rejoicing, being fully satisfied that God had more than amply rewarded him for the cost and labor of preparing the barn for holding meeting, and receiving God's prophets.

"I might go on to relate a great many interesting circumstances which took place at the commencement of United Brethren preaching in the aforesaid valleys; but the cases mentioned may suffice as specimens of the whole."



"A few years before there were any members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ residing in Chambersburg, Franklin county, Pa., brothers John Crider, Jacob Wingert, and myself, frequently preached in that place. At first we preached in brother Braiser's house, to more hearers than the house could hold, many listening outside, for want of room within. Some time after this, in the year 1818 or 1819, father John Oaks, a United brother, had settled with his family in Chambersburg, and wanted preaching in his house. I then preached alternately there and at Braiser's. In a short time these houses could not contain the people who would come out to hear the preaching. At one of these meetings held in father Oaks' house, the Spirit of God came upon the people like the 'rushing of a mighty wind.' Many of them felt the power of God in a manner they had not experienced before. There was one general move among them at that time, some shouting, leaping, and praising God for his mercy, in filling their hearts with his love, joy, and peace. I felt heaven upon earth within me. Upon the whole, we had a glorious meeting. Before dismissing the people,

I stated that, if any persons present wished to unite together as one body, to serve the Lord, an opportunity would be afforded them to do so. Twenty-six persons came forward and attached themselves to the Church of the United Brethren in Christ at that time. This was the origin of the United Brethren in Chambersburg."

Mr. Huber labored, as a presiding elder, with great zeal and success, for a number of years, since which time he has served the cause in the capacity of a local preacher. A blunt, earnest, hospitable, and independent Christian, he did much, during the first half of the century, to extend the kingdom of Christ in Pennsylvania.

The name of JACOB DEHOFF appears on the minutes of the old conference as early as 1809; and as early as 1815, when the whole itinerant force of the church east of the mountains consisted of J. Snyder, H. G. Spayth, I. Niswander, H. Kumler, sen., and Jos. Hoffman, he commenced to travel. Of his personal history we have been able to obtain the following interesting facts: "During the time that Dr. Senseny resided in York, Pa., a Mr. Dehoff had a son, then about seventeen years of age, who was much

afflicted. Not knowing the nature of his complaint, he sent him to Dr. S., for medical advice and treatment. The good Dr., after an examination of his case, gave it as his opinion that he had consumption of the lungs, and that he could not cure him. He advised him to pray to God, and prepare for the next world, adding, that if the Lord converted his soul, it might be possible that he would also heal his body. On the lad's return, he told his father what the Dr. had said to him, and betook himself to prayer. This gave much offense to the father. The idea that his son might be healed through prayer was foreign to his views. He commanded him to cease praying, and declared that, if he did not, he should leave his house, and seek a home elsewhere. The afflicted boy, rather than give up seeking the Lord, left his father's house, to seek a home among strangers. He knew not where to go; but, having heard of George A. Guething, who resided on the Antietam, about eighty miles distant, he directed his course thither. When he reached the good man's house, weary with travel, afflicted in body and in soul, he gave him an account of his situation. Mr. Guething, who never sent



the distressed empty away, kindly took him in, and advised him to continue in prayer. Not long afterward he found the pearl of great price, after which he was healed of his bodily affliction, became a preacher of the Gospel, as we have seen, and lived in God's service to the age of seventy years. He then died in the triumphs of faith."\*

\* We are indebted to S. Huber's Autobiography for this incident.

## CHAPTER VI.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING RECRUITS—M'NAMAR, HAVENS, SPICER, STUBBS, ROSS, SHINGLEDECKER, STEWARD, ANTRIM, AND THE BONEBRAKES—SURVEY OF THE WHOLE WORK IN 1820.

The reader has probably observed that, prior to 1813, the name of no English minister appears upon the journals of either of the conferences; and it may be interesting and profitable to trace the hand of Providence, which, in a manner altogether unexpected, furnished the church with her first English itinerant.

About the year 1811 the citizens of bishop Zeller's neighborhood, desiring a school teacher, secured the services of John McNamar, who resided in Fairfield, Green county, O. Mr. McNamar is described, by one who was acquainted with him at the time, as a small, lithe, sharp-visaged, pock-marked, witty man, careless alike of his temporal and of his

spiritual interests. He was of Scotch-Irish extraction, and was born in Virginia in 1779.

When Mr. S., in compliance with the contract, went to Fairfield with his large, covered wagon, to remove the schoolmaster, with his family, to the new theater of his labors, he was taken aback to find a gay dancing party at his house, giving him a farewell visit. The dance occupied the night, and the schoolmaster and his family, early next morning, were on their way to the neighborhood of Germantown.

In their new home they were brought into contact with a people who feared the Lord. The simple, earnest piety of the German Brethren made a profound impression upon Mr. McNamar's mind; and it was not long until, at a meeting held at Mr. Zeller's barn, he experienced religion. Soon after his conversion he began to preach; and, in 1813, he sent a letter to the Miami conference, which met that year in Fairfield county, Ohio, requesting a license to preach. Upon the recommendation of Mr. Zeller, he was received into the conference, and authorized to preach. The following year he became an itinerant. In 1816 he was ordain-



ed. He was a delegate to the third, fifth, and sixth general conferences; and, after the decease of bishop Newcomer, he was elected a general superintendent, but he did not accept the office.

From the period of his appointment to a circuit in 1814, until worn out by the toils and privations of a pioneer itinerant life, he devoted himself to the Master's work with a singleness of aim, and resoluteness of purpose, which have seldom been equaled. He planted the larger part of the early English United Brethren churches in south-western Ohio and southern Indiana; and he was not only eminently successful in organizing churches and forming circuits, but also in re-enforcing the ministry. An examination of the minutes of the Miami and Indiana conferences, from 1814 to 1834, will show that to Mr. McNamar, as an agent of Providence, the church is indebted for a large number of the most effective itinerant ministers who entered the ranks during that interesting period of her history.

As an itinerant, he was an example of punctuality worthy of imitation. "When the time arrived for him to start to an appointment," writes Mr. G. Bonebrake, "he was

off. He would wait for no one, and listen to no excuses. Rain, snow, mud, swollen streams and floating causeways,—any of these, or all of them combined,—could not change his purpose. Nothing but a physical impossibility would detain him from an appointment.

As a preacher, he deserves to rank amongst the first class of New Testament ministers. He used correct and forcible language; spoke slowly, distinctly pronouncing each word, and yet he never wearied an audience, but kept the attention fixed to the close. Being well versed in polemic divinity, he devoted much attention to the exposition and defense of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, in opposition to the New-Lightism, then at the zenith of its strength in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. His sermons on the Divinity of Christ, often preached to immense congregations at camp-meetings, made a profound impression. It must not be inferred, however, that he was a religious pugilist, devoting his whole time in the pulpit to theological disquisitions, and finding his reward in the defeat of his antagonist, or in the applause of his friends. Far from it. He

was not a vain theologian. His object was to save men; and he had the happy faculty of following up a clear exposition and masterly defense of some great truth with a heart-searching application.

To say that he was a poor man, and that he suffered, is unnecessary, when it is known that his salary ranged from \$40,00 to \$130,00 a year, and that he had a large and very helpless family to support. He could say in truth,—

“Nothing on earth I call my own;  
A stranger to the world unknown,  
I all their goods despise;  
I trample on their whole delight,  
And seek a city out of sight,  
A city in the skies.”

Mr. Spayth has well remarked, that he was “a true son of the Gospel, determined to march in the front ranks of the ministerial army. He chose the frontier country for his field of labor, \* \* and Miami, Indiana, White River, and Wabash conferences, will long be blessed with an increase of his labors.” He died in Clay county, Indiana, in the year 1846, aged 67 years, having served God in the ministry thirty-six years.

After Mr. McNamar entered the itineracy, the work began to spread into the English



communities in Ohio and Indiana, in all directions; and the number of preachers who could speak the English language only was rapidly multiplied. Thus, in 1815, we find the names of two other English ministers on the minutes, viz., W. P. Smith and Noah Wheeler, making, with Mr. McNamar, three in all. In 1818 the force had increased to five, John McGary and John Day having been received. In 1819 Nathaniel Havens, Samuel S. Spicer, William Robison, and John Harvy, were added to the English force.

NATHANIEL HAVENS was one of the most useful and influential of the early ministers in the West. He was born in Sussex county, N. J., December 13th, 1772. In early life he was a devoted disciple of Thomas Paine, and served as a clerk in an East Indiaman. After his marriage he abandoned the sea, and, being invited by Rev. John Totton to attend a Methodist meeting, and listen without prejudice, he agreed to do so. At the close of the services he attempted to rise from his seat; but the power of God had taken hold upon him, and he fell helpless upon the floor. For four weeks he sought the Lord, in great agony of spirit. On the morning of his conversion he went

out from his home a picture of distress. His wife, apprehensive that despair had taken possession of his mind, and fearing that he might attempt suicide, followed, and found him among the brushwood on the hill-side, wrestling in prayer. She tarried at a little distance until the blessing came, and he began to shout victory with a loud voice. Losing all thought of his body, and rolling down the hill-side to the edge of a stream, he was caught by a shrub, thereby barely escaping a plunge of ten feet into the water. "I came near being converted and immersed," said he, "at the same moment."

Removing to the West, Mr. Havens joined the Miami conference, as above stated, and was immediately employed as an itinerant preacher. He soon attained an influential position in the conference, and was sent as a delegate to the general conferences of 1821 and 1825. He was an able preacher; and, as an itinerant minister, he was faithful and efficient. In person, Mr. Havens is described as a tall, portly man, of commanding appearance and address. He died, deeply regretted, May the 15th, 1832, in the 60th year of his age.

S. S. SPICER, received into the Miami con-

ference in 1819, was a valuable accession to the ministerial force. He was well educated, had read law, possessed a glowing imagination, and vast wealth of language. His soul seemed as a flame of fire. He was distinguished in the pulpit for an earnestness and pathos which were well nigh irresistible. His descriptive powers enabled him to portray the final arraignment, trial, and condemnation of the wicked, in a manner which was awfully solemn, and even terrifying. In one instance, at a camp-meeting in the Miami Valley, all the ministers in the stand were so affected, that they dropped upon their knees while he was preaching, and sinners fell on all sides, or fled in the utmost terror.

Father George Bonebrake, a clear-headed, and not excitable man, relates that, on one occasion, while listening to a sermon delivered by Mr. Spicer, all in the congregation, including himself, left their seats, without being conscious of the fact, and found themselves, at the close of the sermon, standing, packed together, around the altar railing, gazing into the face of the preacher.

Mr. Spicer took charge of the Miami circuit in 1820, having J. Fetherhuff for his



colleague. His circuit included fifty-two appointments!

Mr. S. was a native of New England, and in person was large and quite fleshy. His voice of stirring eloquence was soon hushed in death.

In 1820, WILLIAM STUBBS and JAMES ROSS were added to the itinerant force in the west. Mr. Stubbs was one of the most useful pioneers of the church in the west. He was of Quaker descent, always wore a plain Quaker dress, and used "thee" and "thou" in his family. He was placed in charge of the Twin creek (O.,) circuit, in 1820; of the Whitewater, (Ind.,) 1821; and he continued to travel in Indiana while health and strength permitted. He was a member of the general conference of 1837. In his manners he was retiring; in conversation sparing. His temperament was melancholy, and all his sermons and exhortations were shaded by the somber hues of his sweet, sad spirit. He thought much, and preached much upon death, judgment, and eternity. As an expounder of the word of God he excelled in the prophecies. These he had studied with care, aided by the best lights he could obtain; and as he was well versed in history, and had a retentive memory, his discourses

on the prophecies were listened to with eager attention and real profit. He received into the church a great many members, and among the number several who afterward became useful ministers. Like the most of the pioneers in Christ's cause, he struggled with poverty, many, many years, but at length, and only a few years since, he left this vale of sorrow for his rich inheritance in heaven.

James Ross, the other English preacher, received in 1820, became an efficient itinerant. In 1820 he was placed in charge of the White-water circuit in Indiana, having A. Shingledecker for colleague.

He was a man of fine personal appearance and manners, dignified, sociable, a systematic and fluent speaker, and, in his best moods, eloquent.

A. SHINGLEDECKER, a brand plucked from the burning, was licensed at Miami, in 1818. He was born near Dayton, O. His father was German, his mother Irish; but in Abraham the Irish predominated, and he grew up a reckless, godless young man. In the late war he was a volunteer, and stories are told of his bold, bad adventures, which need not be repeated here. Drinking, fiddling, and dancing, were his favorite amusements. In a

very remarkable manner was he saved from hell. It was on this wise: He went to a dance, and, as was his wont, took his violin to play; and as the first set formed on the floor to dance, and just as he struck up the tune, one of the number, a young lady, fell at his feet. He dropped his violin, and snatched her from the floor, but she was dead! Not a syllable did she utter, not a breath did she breathe.

Of course the ball was closed; and as Mr. Shingledecker went home that night, he thought of his soul. Deep conviction fastened upon him, and he resolved that he would dance no more; and deliberately walking up to a tree, he smashed his violin into a hundred pieces. Then he sought the Lord, was powerfully converted, and subsequently called into the ministry.

He is described as a tall, spare, and rather singular-looking man. "When preaching, in his best days," says father John Morgan, "his voice would gradually rise until, in a still evening, he could easily be heard a mile or more; and who could hear him and not be affected. Surely I could not. His exhortations in general, were the most stirring I ever heard from any man."



In 1821 WILLIAM STEWARD appeared before the Miami annual conference, then in session at Adelpia, "with a good recommendation, and was joyfully received." This record intimates that he was regarded as a valuable accession to the ministerial force of the conference; and the favorable impressions which he made, when he was received, were more than realized. He entered the itinerant ranks promptly, and was placed on the Kinniconick circuit, where he labored with great acceptability. At the next conference he was ordained. In 1823 he traveled Brush creek circuit; in 1824, Washington. The following year he appears to have been elected presiding elder; and he was a member of the general conference of 1825. His labors were confined to the country now included within the boundaries of the Scioto conference; and no name, perhaps, is held dearer by the older members of the church in that conference.

He was a tall, slender man, with large, Roman nose, piercing eyes, and frank, open, cheerful countenance. He had a strong voice, and a ready utterance; and he was fired with a quenchless zeal. Bishop Russel has furnished the best sketch of him we have been able to obtain. He says:—

"Rev. William Steward, my second presiding elder, was one of the Boanerges of his day. He was a man of distinguished piety and usefulness. His experimental knowledge, good sense, ready wit, cheerfulness of temper, unaffected piety, and humility, rendered his presence exceedingly agreeable, and his conversation highly entertaining in the families with whom he staid, so that he was always a most welcome guest. His presence was much coveted by the sick; and his excellent judgment, and affectionate disposition, rendered him an angel of mercy in the sick-room. His prayers were never tedious, never wearisome, but always pointed, appropriate, and comprehensive; and he possessed, in an unusual degree, the power of drawing the worshiper with him to the throne of grace, and leading the devotions of the congregation.

"As a minister, his method was easy, correct, and clear. His language was the plain, strong Saxon of king James' version of the Bible. Every sentence uttered was pregnant with thought; and his mind seemed as a perennial fountain. He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God. Free grace was his favorite theme. He regarded regeneration as a fundamental doctrine of the Bible.

The necessity, nature, and evidences of this great work were set forth by him in a most convincing and forcible manner, and the echo of his voice is still in my ear."

With a strong constitution, a powerful mind, deep-toned piety, and a zeal for souls which caused him to despise the honors of the world, and to labor incessantly, without adequate pecuniary compensation, is it any wonder that he was almost idolized by the church?

In 1829, after only eight years of labor in the itineracy, he died, while in his field of labor, and away from home. He died very suddenly, but died at his post, happy in God. "His death," says Mr. Hanby, "was entered upon the conference journal with painful emotions."

In 1818, JACOB ANTRIM, then a round-faced young man, of very fine voice, fluent speech, and taking manners, was brought out from Pennsylvania to the west, by bishops New-comer and Zeller, and admitted into the conference, as an exhorter. He began to itinerate immediately; and his success was remarkable. He was a good singer, an ingenious preacher, a great exhorter, had tact, and an energy and buoyancy of spirit which bore him on-



ward, where stronger men would have sunk down in discouragement, if not in despair. In the Miami Valley, and especially in southern Indiana, he was remarkably successful in gathering members into the church. During a long series of years, he was an unrivaled revivalist.

Mr. Antrim compiled and published the second English hymn-book circulated among the United Brethren in Christ. It is a respectable book, containing 332 hymns, some of which are from the compiler's own pen. This collection was printed at Dayton, Ohio, by Regans & Van Cleve, in 1829.

After forty-two years of service in the ministry, Mr. Antrim finished his course with joy, February the 19th, 1861. He left his home, at Germantown, in June, 1860, and went to Pennsylvania, where he was engaged in his favorite work of holding protracted meetings, until prostrated by illness. As death drew near, he joined with some friends in singing the dear old hymn,

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand," etc.,

and then sweetly slept in Jesus, having reached his 70th year.

The BONEBRAKES, six brothers, all min-

isters, began to enter the ministry in 1820. GEORGE and HENRY entered the traveling connection, and, by their eminent ability, piety, and energy, contributed greatly to the progress of the cause, from 1820 to 1840. George was regarded as a superior doctrinal preacher, and as an excellent disciplinarian.

Let us now take a survey of the whole work, as it stood in 1820-21, the year prior to the third general conference.

Of the number of members no record had been kept. At the annual meeting of the old conference, sometimes called the Maryland, at other times the Hagerstown, and in the minutes simply "The Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ," thirty-one ministers were in attendance; and, allowing twenty to be absent, the whole number would be fifty-one.

The work was divided into four presiding elders' districts, three circuits, and one station. George Guething was placed in charge of Virginia district; Samuel Huber, of Hagerstown; Abraham Mayer, of Juniata; and John Neiding, of Lancaster. John Snyder was stationed at Baltimore, in the Otterbein Church. Hagerstown circuit was traveled by William Brown and Conrad Weist; Ju-

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niata, John Brown; Virginia, Daniel Pfeifer and Jacob Dunnaho. Thus we have, in the old conference,—

Preachers (estimated),	-	-	-	-	51
Fields of labor,	-	-	-	-	8
Itinerant preachers,	-	-	-	-	10
Contributed for the support of the preachers,	-	-	-	-	\$371,00

Of the itinerant preachers, only five received pay, as follows:—

William Brown,	-	-	-	-	\$74,28
David Fleck,	-	-	-	-	74,28
Daniel Pfeifer,	-	-	-	-	74,28
Conrad Weist,	-	-	-	-	74,28
John Brown,	-	-	-	-	74,28

We find but one preacher in this conference who was not German. That exception was Jacob Dunnaho, an Irishman. Some of the members of the conference, however, could speak the English language, and a few of them could speak it quite well. They were at home, however, in the German.

In the Miami conference a greater number of itinerants had been employed, and the missionary movement in the English communities had been fully inaugurated. The work was divided into five districts ar





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The settlement made with the traveling preachers in the Miami, in 1821, just before the general conference (we have no record of the settlement for 1820), will show by what preachers this money was raised, and how distributed. We copy from the journal of the conference:

## SETTLEMENT WITH THE TRAVELING PREACHERS.

Itinerants.	Collected on their Field.	Dividend.
James Ross, - - - - -	\$45 65	\$41 16
A. Shingledecker, - - -	16 00	41 16
J. Fetherhuff, - - - -	22 45 $\frac{3}{4}$	25 00
John Day, - - - - -	38 58	31 34
Samuel S. Spicer, - - -	49 00	44 00
Jacob Antrim, - - - -	66 61	25 00
J. Smaltz, - - - - -	9 17 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 00
Lewis Kramer, - - - -	5 06 $\frac{1}{4}$	23 00
N. Havens, - - - - -	19 00	26 00
W. Stubbs, - - - - -	35 30	43 50
John McNamar, - - - -	14 76	41 16
John McGary, - - - -	27 37 $\frac{1}{2}$	50 00
	\$348 95 $\frac{3}{4}$	\$409 32

"Of the above, Christian Newcomer brought \$55.23 as a contribution from the East. The dividend is made according to the time each preacher traveled." From this settlement it appears that the whole sum collected for the support of the travel-

In the Muskingum conference the cause had advanced more slowly, owing, no doubt, to the want of an efficient itineracy. At the second session of the conference, held in 1819, "Christian Berger" (we copy from the minutes) "agreed to travel a circuit for six months, to try the experiment, which was sanctioned by the conference." In 1820 it was resolved to divide the conference into two districts, and Matthias Bortsfeld was elected presiding elder for the new district thus created. Christian Berger was appointed to travel for one year, and C. Seniff and Abraham Forney for six months each.

This conference, then, in 1820, had—

Preachers (estimated),	-	-	-	-	12
Itinerants, -	-	-	-	-	3
Fields of labor,	-	-	-	-	3

The sum paid for preaching in 1820 was



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have not been able to obtain; but, for the following year, it stood thus:

A. Forney, five months, -	\$18 00
C. Berger, " " -	18 60
C. Seniff, four " -	8 00

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Total, - - - - \$44 60

## SUMMARY OF ALL THE CONFERENCES.

Preachers, - - - -	114
Itinerants, - - - -	36
Districts and circuits, - - - -	23
Contributed for the support of preaching, - - - -	\$814 92

This does not include the salary paid the pastor of the Otterbein Church in Baltimore. As to the number of members, we are not able to calculate with any great degree of confidence. Allowing, however, for each itinerant preacher, including the presiding elders, 250 members, the whole membership of the church, in 1820, would be 9,000. Mr. Asbury estimates the number in the church, before the pruning process commenced, at 20,000, which would indicate a loss of more than 10,000 members.

These facts abundantly prove what has been said of the severe ordeal through which

the church passed, between 1810 and 1820; and had we not already introduced a class of remarkably promising laborers, raised up and brought into the ministry near the close of this period of trial, the reader would go up to the general conference of 1821 with feelings of discouragement.

## CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1821—RULES ON  
SLAVERY, AND THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC—THE  
TEMPERANCE CAUSE —JOSEPH HOFFMAN.

The third general conference convened at  
Dewalt Mechlin's, in Fairfield county, Ohio,  
May the 15th, 1821. The whole church, as  
in 1815, had been divided into districts, and  
were named and represented as follows:

*Maryland*—Samuel Huber, Wm. Brown.

*Carlisle*—Michael Bear.

*Virginia*—George Guething, D. Pfeifer.

*Miami*—Henry Joseph Frey, Henry Ev-  
inger, Henry Kumler, sen., A. Bonsler.

*Muskingum*—Michael Bortsfield, A. Forney.

*New Lancaster*—Lewis Kramer, Nathaniel  
Havens.

*Lower Lancaster*—George Benedum, Joseph  
Hoffman.

*Indiana*—John McNamar, John George  
Pfrimmer.

Three delegates elected from the East



failed to attend. Newcomer and Zeller were members of the conference by virtue of their office as superintendents.

Bishop Newcomer called the conference to order, read John xv., offered prayer, and delivered an address. Of the matters brought before this conference, those of general interest will be noticed in the order in which they came up.

1. *The plan of representation.* A letter or petition from two influential ministers not in the conference was presented, praying that the discipline be so changed that each conference be represented in general conference by two itinerant and two local preachers. The matter of the petition was considered, and, on motion of Jos. Hoffman, it was resolved that the plan adopted in 1815 remain in force.

2. *The plan of supporting the ministry.* This subject, very properly, occupied much attention. It was introduced on a motion made by Mr. McNamar, who had traveled the year before for \$41,16, one half only of which was contributed by the circuit upon which he traveled. The conference provided that a circuit steward should be appointed by the presiding elder and the circuit preacher for each circuit; and that each

class should elect an assistant steward, that is, an assistant to the circuit steward, which assistant steward should be required to lift quarterly contributions in money and produce (the produce to be valued according to its worth between brothers), for the support of the itinerant preachers; and that said assistant steward should report all money and produce obtained to the circuit steward, who should report to the quarterly conference. It was also made the duty of the presiding elder to carry the reports made at the quarterly conferences, by the circuit stewards, to the annual conference. These measures told favorably upon the finances of the conferences.

3. *Action on slavery.* On no subject have the United Brethren in Christ preserved a cleaner record than on the subject of slavery. The idea of chattel slavery was abhorrent to all the fathers; and, although many of them were born and raised in slave States, yet it is not on record that any one of them ever uttered a single syllable of apology for slavery. Otterbein and Boehm, in common with Asbury and Coke, and the leading divines of all the Protestant churches in their day, protested against the African slave

trade, and against slavery itself. But, while many other churches have receded from the old anti-slavery ground on which they stood during the first and second decade of the century, the United Brethren in Christ have firmly, and almost alone, maintained theirs. Our simple-hearted people could never reconcile it to their consciences to buy and sell their brethren in the Lord, or any for whom Christ died; and, true to the self-reliant and industrious habits which they brought from the Fatherland, they preferred to earn their own bread with the honest labor of their own hands.

Mr. Spayth says: "Involuntary servitude, except for crime, has always been condemned by our church. Never, at any period, did the church view it in any other light than as oppressive and unjust. They always testified decidedly against the system, giving it no countenance, neither receiving nor encouraging a holder of slaves to unite with the church."\*

Owing to the rapid expansion of slave territory, the wonderful growth of the cotton interest, and the consequent enhancement of the price of slaves, public sentiment, and

\* U. B. History, p. 155.



even church sentiment, began to relax amazingly, as early as 1821; and a few years sufficed to silence the press, the pulpit, and the church of the South, in relation to the sin, and to place in ignominious bondage nearly all the denominations of the whole country! The general conference of 1821, foreseeing, probably, the wide-spread and alarming corruption of the Christian conscience, wisely resolved to place upon record, in plain terms, the doctrine of Christianity, as they had received it, in relation to this evil, and effectually bar the door against it.

The following resolution was accordingly adopted, and placed in the discipline:

COPY OF THE ORIGINAL.

\* Beschlossen und verordnet, daß keine Sklaverei, in welcher Gestalt sie auch bestehen möge und in keinem Sinne des Worts, in unserer Gemeinschaft Statt haben oder erlaubt werden soll; und sollten Personen sich vorfinden, die Sklaven halten und Glieder unter uns sein oder sich melden, um solche zu werden: so können Erstere keine Glieder der Vereinigten Brüder in Christo bleiben und Letztere keine werden, es sei denn, daß sie ihre Sklaven frei setzen, so bald ihnen von der jährlichen Konferenz vorgeschrieben wird, so zu thun. Es soll auch kein Glied unserer Gemeinschaft das Recht haben, irgend einige Sklaven, die es jetzt haben mag, zu verkaufen. Es soll in der Gewalt der jährlichen Konferenz sein, solchen Sklavenhaltern eine Vorschrift zu machen, ob und wie lange

sie ihre Sklaven verdingen dürfen; doch soll es keiner Konferenz erlaubt sein, solchen Sklavenhaltern Erlaubniß zu geben, ihre Sklaven länger zu halten oder zu verdingen, als bis der Meister durch die Arbeit solcher Knechte eine Vergeltung hat für die Kosten ihrer Erziehung oder ihres Ankaufs.

## TRANSLATION.

“\* Resolved and enacted, That no slavery, in whatever form it may exist, and in no sense of the word, shall be permitted or tolerated in our church; and should there be found any persons holding slaves, who are members among us, or make application to become such, then the former can not remain, and the latter can not become, members of the United Brethren in Christ, unless they manumit their slaves as soon as they receive directions from the annual conference so to do. Neither shall any member of our church have the right to sell any of the slaves which he or she may now hold. It shall be in the power of the annual confer-

\* As there has been some dispute about the precise reading of this rule, we have taken some pains to obtain it as originally adopted. It seems that J. G. Pfrimmer kept a journal of the general conference; and from that journal bishop Samuel Hiestand copied the minutes of the general conference of 1821 into the Miami conference journal. We give the rule in the German, as we find it in the handwriting of bishop H. The translation is by E. Light, and is as nearly literal as it can be made. See Miami conference journal, pp. 96—103.

ence to prescribe to such slaveholders whether, and how long, they may hire out their slaves; but no conference shall be allowed to give to such slaveholders permission to hold or hire out their slaves for any time longer than until the master shall, through the labor of such servants, have a remuneration for the expenses of raising or buying them."

The reader will not fail to notice the points in this resolution. 1. No slavery shall be permitted or tolerated. 2. If there should be persons in the church who hold slaves, they can not remain in it, unless they manumit them as soon as they receive notice to do so. 3. If slaveholders apply for admission, they can not be received unless they set their slaves free. 4. No one who may be involved in the evil shall rid himself of it by selling his slaves. 5. The annual conference shall become the guardian of any persons who may be held as slaves by members of the church, and make for them a fair contract as to the time they shall serve, as a remuneration to their masters for raising or buying them. 6. No conference is allowed to require a slave to pay



any more to his master than simple justice, as between man and man, demands.

It may be thought that this resolution is inconsistent with itself, because it forbids all slavery and then provides for certain cases; but this objection overlooks the fact that the provisions are not for slavery, but for emancipation. It is *not* admitted in the resolution that any one may ever be rightfully held as a slave; but it is implied that one who is in the condition of a slave according to the civil law, may be under *pecuniary* obligations to a Christian; and of the fact of such obligations and their extent, the annual conference is made the arbiter. One can readily conceive how such obligations might arise, and become the subject of Christian arbitration.

Still, the subject of arbitration, in cases of this kind, is one of extreme difficulty; and it was deemed advisable, at a subsequent general conference, to remove from the rule provision for such arbitration. The rule as amended, and to which the church has adhered through evil report and good report, is as follows:

All slavery, in every sense of the word, is totally prohibited, and shall in no way be

tolerated in our church. Should any be found in our society who hold slaves, they can not continue as members unless they do personally manumit or set free such slaves.

And when it is known to any of our ministers in charge of a circuit, station, or mission, that any of its members hold a slave, or slaves, he shall admonish such members to manumit such slave or slaves; and if such persons do not take measures to carry out the discipline, they shall be expelled by the proper authorities of the church; and any minister refusing to attend to the duties above described, shall be dealt with by the authorities to which he is amenable.

5. *Liquor-making.* Another measure of great importance, adopted by the general conference of 1821, deserves especial notice. It relates to the manufacture of intoxicating drinks. The subject was introduced by Geo. Benedum, who offered a motion which declared that "no preacher shall be allowed to carry on a distillery." William Brown moved to amend, by striking out the word "preacher," and substituting the word "member." It was then—

"Resolved—That neither preacher nor lay-

member shall be allowed to carry on a distillery; and that distillers be requested to willingly cease the business; that the members of the general conference be requested to lay this resolution before the several annual conferences; that it shall then be the duty of the preachers to labor against the evils of intemperance during the interval between this and the next general conference, when the subject shall again be taken up for further consideration."

If we may make a single exception, this is the earliest ecclesiastical action on record, which was aimed at the suppression of the liquor traffic. The earliest action which has come under our notice, was taken by the General Association of Massachusetts Proper, in 1811, at which time a committee, of which Rev. Dr. Worcester was chairman, was appointed to draft the constitution of a society, whose object should be to check the progress of intemperance, viewed by the association as a growing evil. It was not, however, until 1813 that the contemplated society was organized and held a meeting. Associated with this movement were some of the most eminent men of New England, such as Hon. Samuel Dexter and Hon. Nathan Dane. But



as it originated among, and was controled by, the Unitarians, it exerted no considerable influence out of the New England States; and it was not until after the organization of the American Temperance Society, in 1826, that the evangelical Christian denominations entered into the movement. This was five years after the United Brethren general conference, composed mainly of German preachers, had committed the United Brethren ministry, in particular, and the United Brethren church, in general, to a decisively aggressive movement against intemperance. The general conference of 1821 did not regard its action as final, but made it the duty of the preachers in all the conferences to "labor against the evils of intemperance," reserving further action for a subsequent general conference. It can not be claimed that the United Brethren were tardy in entering the temperance movement; nor, in view of repeated general and annual conference action, and the uniform activity of members and ministers since 1821, that they have been slothful in the work. The truth is they were among the pioneers in the temperance movement, and have always fought in the advanced columns. It may be added that a powerful impulse

was given to the temperance movement, by the hearty co-operation of nearly all the evangelical Christian churches, with the American Temperance Society. During the first year of the existence of this society, 30 auxiliaries were formed; during the second, 220, five of which were state institutions; and by 1829, eleven state societies, and more than 1,000 auxiliaries had been formed. In 1831 more than 2,200 societies, embracing 170,000 members, were reported to the parent society; and it was believed that there were in the country, not less than 3,000 societies, numbering 300,000 members; more than 1,000 distilleries had put out their fires. It was reported to the annual meeting at Boston that 120 vessels had sailed from that port since the previous meeting, without any provision of spirits on board. In 1833 the auxiliary societies numbered 4,000, the members 600,000; and more than 4,000 merchants had ceased to traffic in ardent spirits, and not less than 4,000 drunkards had ceased to use intoxicating drinks. It was also reported, upon reliable data, that 20,000 families were then living in ease and comfort, 50,000 children released from the blasting influence of drunken parents, 100,000 more from that parental influ-

ence which tended to make them drunkards, as results of the temperance movement. It was believed that more than a million of persons in the United States abstained entirely from the use of intoxicating drinks.

The principle of total abstinence was not ingrafted into the original society, and it was first made the matter of an article of mutual agreement at Andover, in 1826; and this principle was adopted by the American Temperance Society in 1829.

The rule in the United Brethren discipline, after undergoing various modifications, assumed its present, and, we suppose, permanent shape, in 1841. It reads as follows:—

“The distilling, vending, and use of ardent spirits as a beverage, shall be, and is hereby forbidden throughout our society; and should any preacher, exhorter, leader, or layman, be engaged in distilling, vending, or using ardent spirits as a beverage, he shall be accountable to the class, or the quarterly or annual conference to which he belongs. If the offending brother be an exhorter, leader, or layman, it shall be the duty of the preacher in charge to admonish him in meekness. If he be a preacher, it shall be the duty of the presiding officer of a quarterly or annual conference to ad-



monish him to desist from his unholy employment, or habit. And if all friendly admonitions fail, such offending person or persons shall no longer be considered members of our church, but shall be expelled from the same; provided, however, that this rule shall not be so construed as to prevent druggists and others from vending or using it for medicinal or mechanical purposes."

To return to the general conference of 1821. Christian Newcomer, although he had now reached his 72nd year, was full of itinerant fire, and able to perform the duties of a superintendent; he was accordingly re-elected. Andrew Zeller, although younger than Mr. Newcomer, being unable to perform the long journeys on horseback required of a superintendent, was not re-elected. His place was filled by the election of Joseph Hoffman, who was then in the vigor of life. Bishop Zeller had worthily filled the office from the period of his first election in 1815.

JOSEPH HOFFMAN, the newly-elected bishop, was born in Cumberland Co., Pa., March 19th, 1780. He experienced religion in 1801; was licensed to preach in 1803; became an itinerant in 1805; was chosen to fill the pulpit vacated by Otterbein in Baltimore, in 1813;

and in 1821, as just stated, was elected bishop.

His talents as an expounder of the sacred Scriptures, and especially of those portions of the Old Testament pertaining to the temple and its service, and other types of the New Covenant, were rare. He was gifted with more than an ordinary share of eloquence. His commanding stature, deep-toned, and well-accented voice, expressive gestures, and thorough earnestness of manner, inspired his hearers of all classes with reverence; and few failed to recognize in him a chosen ambassador of the court of heaven. Mr. Spayth, who heard him in his best days, relates some incidents which serve to illustrate his manner of preaching better than any merely formal statement. Take, for example, the following: "At a quarterly meeting held at John Strickler's, in Westmoreland Co., Pa., in 1817, Joseph Hoffman preached from Isaiah 1: 18, 19, 20. 'Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,' etc. While dwelling upon the character of sin staining the soul in all its parts, crimson denoting the indelible stain

which no earthly element can wash away, but which almighty grace, through the atoning blood of Jesus, can remove entirely, remove from every soul, even the most deeply crimsoned with sin, the audience listened with attention, and were filled with joy, for his speech distilled as the dew and as the small rain upon the tender grass. But when the conditions were presented, and the threatenings of insulted justice introduced, the feeling became intense. The soul stained and spotted with sin which added the crime of rebellion against Jehovah, was brought into the presence of the lawgiver, and as he reached the last verse of the text, 'But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,' his voice rose with the grandeur and solemnity of the theme, and it seemed as if the sword were actually drawn. 'What!' cried he, 'rebel, and there the sword, the sword!' Sinners were paralyzed with fear, as if they were waiting for the blow. The preacher paused, and looking up, began to pray: 'Oh Lord! spare this people, although their sins be as scarlet, and as crimson, in the fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness wash them, and make them white as snow.' The reader



can imagine how well prepared his sin-stricken audience were to follow him in his prayer.

Bishop Hoffman was an excellent specimen of an itinerant minister. Strong in body, careless of exposure, suffering poverty joyfully, with a voice which, "without being strained, and flowing in unison with the grandeur of the gospel theme, could be distinctly heard a mile or more," he seemed the personification of all that was desirable in a pioneer bishop.

While he filled the office of superintendent, he traveled extensively, and preached the gospel in many places where the United Brethren were unknown. One summer was spent in Canada, in incessant traveling and preaching, where the fruits of his labors, like those of Whitfield, were gathered by others. He spent a winter in the city of New York, "where he gained access to many pulpits amongst the great and good; and had rest been his object, he might have been settled there in a very desirable living which was proffered him." In 1824 he visited Philadelphia, where he made many friends, who parted with him reluctantly.

Mr. Hoffman filled the office of general superintendent from 1821 to 1825, with eminent ability and faithfulness.

## CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1825—BAPTISM, ORDINATION, ITINERACY—THE ENGLISH ELEMENT—MIAMI CONFERENCE DIVIDED—PFRIMMER, MAYER, ETC.

On the 15th of May, 1825, the fourth general conference assembled at Dewalt Mechlin's, Fairfield Co., O. The members present were Christian Newcomer and Joseph Hoffman, bishops.

*Pennsylvania conference* (called Hagerstown on the journal), Abraham Mayer, John Hildt, Jacob Daub, Daniel Pfeifer, William Brown.

*Muskingum conference*: H. G. Spayth, Henry Errett, James Johnston, J. Crum, Christian Berger.

*Miami conference*: Henry Kumler, sen., Henry Joseph Fry, Jacob Antrim, John Fetherhuff, Samuel Heistand, Nathaniel Havens, Andrew Zeller, John G. Pfrimmer, George Hoffman, Dewalt Mechlin, William Ambrose, and William Steward.

Bishop Newcomer opened the conference, reading Matt. 25, offering prayer, and exhorting the brethren to unfeigned love.

The items of general interest passed upon by this conference, may be briefly stated under appropriate heads:

1. *On baptism.* To the last paragraph of the confession of faith, the following words were added:

"That from henceforth it shall not be lawful for one preacher to censure or condemn, whether in private or in public, the mode of baptism of another; and whosoever shall make himself guilty of such act, shall, upon discovery, be considered a defamer, and be held accountable to the next annual conference." This item was reported to the conference by a committee of which the venerable John G. Pfrimmer was chairman, and was adopted by a unanimous vote.\*

\* The early brethren, as we have already seen, set their faces like a flint against ultraism on the subject of baptism. Mr. Huber relates an anecdote of Mr. Grosh, bearing on this subject, which is worth preserving. "A man living in Lancaster county, Pa., some years ago, got under conviction, and began to pray to God. He went about praying in almost every corner for a long time, without finding relief. It came into his mind one day, that if he wanted to get religion, he must be baptized by immersion. At once he resolved to do so, and when he went into the water he had faith that God would bless him, and so it turned out. He got religion in the very act of immersion. From this he argued, that, as he had been seeking the Lord for a long time,



2. *Ordination.* It was decided that in case an elder is elected a superintendent, he need not be re-ordained,—a second ordination being without scriptural warrant. It appears that the idea of ordaining bishops never had any hold in the convictions of the church; and it was owing, no doubt, to a very strong outside influence to which the church was subjected from 1815 to 1821, that a form for the ordination of a bishop was introduced, and under it two bishops, Zeller and Hoffman, ordained. A few years sufficed for this unscriptural usage.

Kindred to the ordination of bishops was that of the ordination of deacons, thus making a third grade in the ministry; and, between 1817 and 1825, quite a number of United Brethren ministers were ordained to the office

but did not find him until he went under the water, so that was the only true way, and there is no other, through which to obtain religion. At one time, when arguing in favor of his idea with Christopher Grosh, the latter told him that 'he knew a man who had been awakened to a sense of his sins, and went about from place to place, seeking the Lord in prayer, just as he had done. At one time this person was in his barn on his knees, when it came into his mind, that he should go up into the garret in his house to pray. Following the impression, he arose from his knees—left the barn—went into the house—and in the act of going up the stairs, before reaching the garret, his soul was set at liberty. This proves,' continued Grosh, 'that a person can be converted without immersion; but it does not prove that every one who would enter the kingdom, must literally climb a ladder.' "

of deacon. This practice was discontinued also. The resolution which was called forth by the election of a new superintendent, H. Kumler, sen., covered the whole ground. It reads as follows:—

“Resolved, That as the newly-elected bishop has already been ordained by the imposition of hands as an elder in the church, a second ordination is not deemed essential to the duties of a bishop; nor do we find a scriptural precedent for a second or a third ordination.”

Thus, after a brief divergence toward episcopal errors, the United Brethren wisely returned to the plain path.

3. *The itineracy.* Two measures were adopted, having an important bearing on the itineracy. 1. The conferences were required to elect presiding elders who should continually travel their districts, and receive an equal salary with the other itinerant preachers. 2. It was voted that a public collection be lifted once a year at each appointment of every circuit, for the support of the superintendents or bishops; and also, that a bishop, if he be a married man, should receive no more than \$160 per annum; if single, no more than \$80. This was the maximum of salary allowed to the other traveling preachers. Hith-

erto the presiding elders had been elected from among the local preachers; and, in most cases, as many presiding elders were elected as there were circuits; and this plan had worked well. It had its advantages; but the time had come when a more thorough and energetic superintendence of the rapidly-enlarging circuits and missions was demanded. The conferences did not all find it practicable to adopt the new plan at once; but it was introduced gradually, and the presiding elders in all the conferences became regular and efficient itinerants. Up to this time, also, the bishops had labored almost without any salary, and no systematic plan of support had been adopted. Otterbein's few wants had been met by the church in Baltimore. Boehm supported himself from his farm. Newcomer, who has never been excelled as an itinerant, sustained himself from his own means. Hoffman, who also gave himself wholly to the work, lived mainly upon his own resources. It is plain, however, that an efficient superintendency can not be ensured without pecuniary cost; and the measures adopted in 1825, added materially to the efficiency of the itinerant system.

4. *Leading questions to candidates for the min-*



*istry.* The leading questions to be answered by candidates for the ministry were revised, and some slight changes made. We insert them as revised:

Have you known God in Christ Jesus as a sin-pardoning God, and have you obtained the forgiveness of your sins?

Have you now peace with God, and is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit?

Do you follow after holiness?

Do you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and that therein only is contained the true way to our soul's salvation?

Upon what is this belief founded?

What is your motive for desiring permission to preach the Gospel?

What is your knowledge of faith, of repentance, of justification, sanctification, and redemption.

Does your own salvation, and the salvation of your fellow-mortals lie nearer your heart, than all other things in the world?

Will you subject yourself to the counsel of your brethren? Will you be obedient and ready to speak or hold your peace, as your brethren may think fit or expedient?

Are you willing, as much as is in your

power, to assist in upholding the itinerant plan, and support the same as much as possible?

5. *Fraternal intercourse.* An effort was made by this conference to renew the fraternal intercourse with the Methodist Episcopal church, which had been abruptly broken off some years previously. Accordingly Henry Kumler, sen., and John McNamar, were deputed to the Ohio M. E. conference, Christian Newcomer and John Hildt, to the Baltimore, and H. G. Spayth and Joseph Hoffman, to the Pittsburg. To this well-meant effort, as might have been expected, there was no response. Rapidly-growing churches sometimes forget even the courtesies due to other Christian bodies, and regard as of no account whatever those kindly interchanges of fraternal recognition between sister denominations which are both pleasant and profitable.

5. *The English.* A resolution was adopted in reference to the English language, which serves as an important way-mark. It reads thus: "Resolved that, if necessary, an English as well as a German secretary shall be elected at any annual conference." "If necessary"—this word expresses a great deal. The English language was making its way

into the church, in the west mainly. The discipline issued by the first general conference was printed in the German language only. Between 1813 and 1821, a few English preachers were admitted, and at the general conference of 1821, two of the number, McNamar and Havens, took their seats as delegates from the Miami conference. Others there were in that general conference, who could preach in the English language, but the German was their mother tongue. The German brethren, however, were not unwilling to extend to the English a friendly hand, and therefore they ordered that the discipline of 1821 should be printed in both languages; and so it appeared—the left side of each page German, the right side English.

Again, in 1825 two English delegates, N. Havens and W. Steward, took their seats in the general conference; and by that time, although the business of all the conferences was done chiefly in German, the English interest had become sufficiently important, in some of the conferences, to render it advisable to make an English as well as a German record. For years, during the period of transition from the German to the English language, the discipline was printed in the manner indi-



cated, and some of the conference journals (the Miami for instance) were written in the same manner.

6. *The Communion.* On this subject the following question and answer were adopted:

Quest. Who shall partake of, and whom shall we invite and admit to the Lord's supper?

Ans. First, all true Christians; and secondly, all who are penitent, seeking the salvation of their souls.

7. *Division of the Miami conference.* Up to 1824 the parent conference of the west, the Miami, extended from the Muskingum river, in Ohio, to Harrison Co., Indiana. It was divided into seven presiding elder's districts, described in the journal as follows:—1. Indiana, consisting of Union and Whitewater circuits, including Indiana to the Ohio state line. 2. Dover, bounded eastward by the Big Miami and the state road from Franklin to Eaton. 3. Germantown, extending north to Greenville, Darke Co., O. 4. Miami, extending from the Big Miami to the Black Swamp. 5. Washington, from the Black Swamp to the Scioto river. 6. Circleville, from the Scioto to the Hocking river. 7. New Lancaster, from the Hocking to the Muskingum.

On the 11th of June, 1824, this old confer-

ence of the west convened at Bookwalter's, in Ross Co., O., to hold its last united session. In the same county, and near the same place, it had held its first session, in 1810. The blessing of God upon fourteen years of persevering work, had given to the conference considerable strength, and the wilderness was beginning to blossom as the rose. Early in the session the subject of a division of the conference was introduced, and it was "voted that the Miami conference should be divided, and that the Black Swamp should be the dividing line; provided that the same shall be sanctioned by general conference. Voted, also, that the western part shall retain the name of the Miami conference, and that the eastern part shall be called Scioto." The general conference sanctioned the action of the Miami conference.

7. *Bishops.* On balloting, it appeared that Christian Newcomer and Henry Kumler had received the greatest number of votes; and they were declared superintendents.

The year 1825 is marked by the decease of two more of the venerable German fathers, Abraham Draksel, and John G. Pfrimmer. The character and labors of these distinguished servants of God are noticed at length in the

first volume of this history; also the *decease* of Mr. Draksel.\*

Mr. Pfrimmer, the pioneer of the church in Indiana, died at his home, near Corydon, in Harrison Co., in the sixty-fourth year of his age, having spent, in the ministry, thirty-five years. In 1824 he visited his brethren in the east, and attended the conference which met at Petersburg, where he preached the ordination sermon from Rom. 12: 1, 2. The May following he attended the general conference which met in Tuscarawas Co., O., where he took an active part in the business, "appeared in good health, and preached with his accustomed clearness and power."

After the conference adjourned, and he returned to Indiana, he expressed the conviction that his "race was run," and that, using his own words, he was "soon going to join the great assembly in heaven." As the time of his departure approached, the peculiar force of his sermons was, if possible, intensified. To Henry Bonebrake he declared that his hope in the Redeemer was unshaken, and that it afforded him great joy as his end drew near." While he was uttering these words," says Mr. B., "his countenance beamed

\* Pages 267—271.



as with a light which was visible upon him in death."

On the 28th of November 1826, ABRAHAM MAYER departed this life, in the 64th year of his age. He had been a faithful minister thirty years. He was born in Cumberland Co., Pa.,—a county which has furnished a large quota of efficient United Brethren ministers,—joined the church, and commenced preaching in 1796. His house was a preaching place for many years, and many great meetings were held there, in the early history of the church, in times which tried men's souls. His hospitality knew no bounds. He was also a faithful preacher, never shrinking from any duty required at his hands. He was a member of the first general conference, and of the fourth, which met in 1825, a little more than a year prior to his demise.

In person he was prepossessing, in dress a Mennonite, in heart and life an Israelite indeed. He possessed a strong and cultivated mind. In prayer he had power with God; in preaching he was stern in reproof, and uncompromising in his dealings with sin, reminding one of Elisha the prophet. He loved the cause of the divine Master, and adorned

it with a most exemplary and holy life, giving much of his time to preaching, and of his substance to raise and build up the church, of which he was a father.\* The following pleasing incident in his life, with the accompanying reflections, are from Mr. Spayth:—

“In 1813, when within four or five miles of an appointment which had been announced for him, he inquired at a respectable farmhouse, the road and the distance to Mr. K.’s. The lady of the house, after giving him the desired information, wished to know whether he was the minister who was expected to preach at Mr. K.’s. He replied in the affirmative.

“‘But,’ said she, ‘you do not look like our ministers—what church do you belong to?’

“‘United Brethren,’ he replied.

“She understood him to say ‘*Converted Brethren*,’ and repeating the word to her husband, she said, ‘who ever heard of the *Converted Brethren* church?’ ‘You may have misunderstood the man,’ suggested the husband. ‘No,’ she insisted, ‘he certainly said he belonged to the *Converted Brethren*.’

“‘Now,’ said she, ‘this is very strange; suppose we go to the meeting,’—and so they

\* Spayth, p. 172.

went. The lady said she was resolved to hear what a converted preacher would preach, expecting to hear something either to amuse or to ridicule. But conviction ensued from what she heard, and the word *converted* rang in her ears all the while, and resulted in the conversion of herself, her husband, and of many in their neighborhood. And yet this man and his wife, had, in their youth, been catechised and confirmed. This is but a case out of a thousand, where under catechetical instructions and trainings, the youthful subjects, nevertheless, remain in profound ignorance of the cause, the nature, and the necessity of the new birth, and as ignorant of the truth of the converting power of God, by a happy experience, as if it were no part of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. *O ye pastors, is it possible that the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed?"*

Come to Calvary's holy mountain,  
 Sinners ruined by the fall!  
 Here a pure and healing fountain,  
 Flows to you—to me—to all—  
 In a full perpetual tide,  
 Opened when the Savior died.



## CHAPTER IX.

## SECRET SOCIETIES—GEN. CONFERENCE OF 1829.

"From the very commencement, the United Brethren in Christ discountenanced secret societies, and refused to receive members of such societies, however unexceptionable in every other respect, into the church, except on one condition, viz., *separation from such orders.* \* \* We do not wish to magnify ourselves against any association of men, but it is sufficient for us to know that a Christian church is one thing, and a secret society quite another. Neither the men belonging to such an order, nor the order itself, could suffer loss by being connected with a Christian church. But not so with the church and its connection with secret combinations. Every such connection has proved a hurt, and a deadly wound. It is to such churches as the leprosy of Gehazi. We have not coveted the Syrian's silver nor changes of garments, and saved

the church!" These are the well-weighed words of one of the fathers in the United Brethren ministry.\* Another of the German fathers says that "Anti-Masonic principles in our church are coeval with her existence." One of the early English ministers† says: "Thirty-six years ago I foolishly joined the Masonic fraternity, for which I was soon expelled from the church. I approve the act; for I soon learned that the oaths and obligations of the order were contrary to God's word, and anti-Christian in their tendency."

While the church was confined mainly to the German communities, the seductions of secrecy had little or no influence upon it. We have obtained the name of but one minister in the East (there may have been others however), who became a Freemason, previous to 1826. John Brown, a young minister of much promise, who had a fine command of both the German and the English languages, of Irish ancestry, on the father's side, in an evil hour, and under the pressure of severe trials, occasioned by the meager support which he received, was induced to take several degrees of Freema-

\* H. G. Spayth.

† J. A. Ball.

sonry. He had not gone far, however, until he had reason to repent. The work of the order had in it nothing congenial to his religious spirit; he saw much that he was obliged to condemn; and, worse than all, he had crippled his influence as a minister of Jesus Christ; even the promised worldly advantages, which had been held up to his eyes to lure him into the fraternity, disappeared. He repented heartily, and was forgiven; but his religious character had received a shock from which it never recovered; and he deemed it best to withdraw from the church.

But it was in the Miami conference, where quite a number of English ministers had been received, that the severest conflict with this wily foe was experienced. At the annual session of this conference, which met on the 6th of June, 1826, the character of Alfred Carder was arrested, on his examination, because he had attended a Masonic lodge. After considerable debate, on the first day of the session, the case was laid over until the succeeding day, when a vote was taken, strongly disapproving of Mr. Carder's course. After further examination, by calling the roll, and asking each mem-



ber whether or not he was a Freemason, it appeared that two other ministers of the conference had been drawn into the mystic brotherhood, viz., John McNamar and Aaron Farmer. These ministers, with Mr. Carder, were among the most influential members of the conference. On the third day of the session (June 8th, 1826), after a thorough discussion of the subject, the conference adopted the following paper by a unanimous vote:

"Whereas, we have members in this conference who belong to the Masonic fraternity, therefore we feel a disposition to bear with them, and deal with them as brethren, so long as they do not attend Masonic lodges; \* \* but if any of our brethren should hereafter join said fraternity, they shall not only be deprived of the privilege of taking charge of a circuit, or of holding any authority in an official capacity, but they shall thereby expel themselves from the connection. No preacher shall encourage any of our members in joining the Masonic fraternity, nor those who are Masons in joining our society."

It was also provided that a circular be sent through the connection, as far as it

might be thought necessary, containing this action, together with the vote of the previous day in relation to attending Masonic lodges.

This paper was adopted, it should be noticed, *several months before the first whisper of the Morgan Revelations was heard*; and when Masonry was a numerous and powerful association, with one or more lodges in every city in the United States. It was in the autumn following the action of the conference which we have recorded, that it became known that William Morgan was about to publish a volume exposing the secrets of Freemasonry.\* *This fact at once and forever extinguishes the idea, recently put forth, that the opposition of the United Brethren in Christ to Freemasonry grew out of the Morgan excitement.*

All the members of the conference, then numbering sixty-two, including those who had joined the Masons, appeared heartily to endorse the action taken. John McNamar made no defense of the institution; and, during the remainder of his eminently useful life, he stood firmly upon the ground oc-

\* New American Cyclopaedia, Vol. I., Article, Anti-Masonry.

cupied by the church, never betraying the confidence his brethren reposed in him.

Aaron Farmer, a younger man, had been decoyed into the lodge by persons who professed a very high appreciation of his talents, who expressed sympathy for his hard lot as an itinerant preacher, and who willingly paid his admission fee. He was assured that there was nothing in the institution which would interfere with his duty to his church, his country, or his God; and that, on the other hand, it would raise him up hosts of friends who would defend him when in danger, and assist him when in want. With many misgivings he had consented that his name should be presented, and in due time he had appeared at the lodge-room, and was initiated. "I then," to use his own words, "became a backslider in heart, and, for a period, kept up the form of godliness, without enjoying its power. Alarmed at the profanity of the initiatory oaths, ashamed of the ridiculous work of the lodge-room, and afraid to confess my error, and thus bring upon myself the displeasure of the order, I stood for a time confounded, unable to decide what to do." At this juncture the conference convened, and its decis-



ive action aided him in reaching a safe conclusion. Some time after the conference he severed the mystic bonds which he had so uneasily worn, and became a free man again. "*I resolved,*" said he, "*to break the unholy alliance, and be at peace with God.*" This resolution he executed with his characteristic energy. Subsequently he traveled extensively, and lectured to crowded audiences, exposing the secrets of Freemasonry, and proving that the institution is unworthy the confidence of honest men. His lectures upon this subject created great excitement; and he was abused and threatened in the usual style; yet, to the day of his death, he swerved not from his testimony. At the last conference which he attended, at Corydon, Indiana, he spoke earnestly upon the subject, recurring, with tears, to his former painful experience of the wickedness of the system, and beseeching the brethren never to swerve from the position they had taken.

With Alfred Carder the case was quite different. He had yielded to the decision of the conference a formal, and, apparently, honest assent; but his heart was not divorced from the fraternity, and he did not fulfill his implied pledges. He soon began

to speak disrespectfully of the conference and of the church; and, as he was a shrewd man, he gave the Brethren much pain. The wicked, and especially the Freemasons, enjoyed his thrusts at the church, appreciated his society, and flattered his wit and talents. At the next session of the conference his name was erased from the minutes; and by this time he had become a Universalist, and was, soon after, employed to preach that heresy in Miamisburg, O. Over the remainder of his life let charity throw a veil.

At the conference in the East, which met in April, 1827, the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved, That we, the members of this annual conference, do not approve of any of our preachers or members belonging to the order of Freemasons; and that, in future, every preacher, and every member, who is connected with this order, or who joins it, shall lose membership in our church."

The United Brethren were not influenced by prejudice, but by reason, in reaching the grave conclusion just noticed. In the first place, they could never see why any *good* society should be *secret*. They reasoned thus: If there is any thing good in Freemasonry, or other se-

cret order, the public need not be kept in ignorance of it; if there is any thing bad, the vail of secrecy should not shield it from reprobation. They also believed that secrecy, as a principle, does not need culture; that a frank, open-hearted spirit is more in accordance with the genius of the Christian religion; that error and crime, not truth and goodness, naturally seek the night and the darkness.\* Jesus, our exemplar, says: "I spake openly to the world, and in secret have I said nothing."

The claims of Freemasonry upon the time

\* Some remarks by the late Horace Mann, one of the most clear-headed men of his age, corroborate this view. He says: "It seems to me that all the higher and nobler instincts of mankind are adverse to such associations. In all ages openness, frankness, artlessness, sincerity, candor, or by whatever other name the free and true expression of a man's conscientiousness may be indicated, have always commanded the admiration of men; while secrecy, disguise, concealment, or a disposition to hide one's thoughts and purposes from his fellow-men, have been regarded with strong repugnance and condemnation. \* \* Why do all languages ascribe an open countenance to a brave and high-souled man, but a close, shy, disguised, secretive one to villains? \* \* One man we call open, frank, transparent; having a window in his bosom through which we can read his heart; with no labyrinth between his breast and his tongue where the truth gets lost. Another is secretive, counterfeit, buried in disguise, deceptive, only half opening his eyes, so that he may see out, but no one see in. \* \* To what class do the secretive animals belong—the fox, the tiger, the cat, the snake? Should brutes imitate men, as in *Æsop's* time, would not these form the secret societies?" See whole letter in *Religious Tel.*, Vol. VII. No. 13.



and money of Christians were regarded as coming into conflict with the claims of Christ. The Brethren believed the scripture which saith, "Ye are not your own," and they regarded an entire consecration of soul, body, time, and estate to Christ, the divine purchaser, as their "reasonable service. Hence, they did not dare to devote a large share of time and money to a purely worldly institution,—an institution, to say the least of it, in no way interested in, or connected with, the Redeemer's cause.

Moreover, Freemasonry is manifestly of the world. Its pretensions to divine origin are too ridiculous to be entertained by any serious mind. But Christ's disciples are commanded to "come out from the world"—to "be separate"—to "be not conformed to the world"—to seek not its "friendship," on peril of losing the friendship of God. Therefore, the Brethren stood aloof from Freemasonry, and from similar worldly societies. The passage, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an

infidel?" they regarded as conclusively prohibitive of a Christian's connection with secret societies. Its application to kindred associations existing in the times of the apostles, is, we believe, generally conceded.

Again, the OATHS exacted by Freemasonry, the secret order after which nearly all others have been modeled, were a stumbling-block to them. Being largely made up from the good old Mennonite stock, they regarded swearing, even before the civil magistrate, as a sin. This conscientious regard for "yea, yea, and nay, nay," frequently involved the early Brethren in difficulties with the civil authorities. About the year 1830, for example, "a highly respectable citizen of Maryland, and member of the United Brethren church, was summoned as a witness before a court of justice. The court refused to allow him to affirm, and demanded that he should be sworn. The witness replied that his conscience would not permit him to swear the oath required. The judge replied, that if the church of which he was a member had a rule of discipline to that effect, he would allow him to affirm, if not, he must swear. No such rule had been enacted, and the brother refused to swear. The court was about to com-

mit him for contumacy, but the counsel prevailed upon him to allow the brother to affirm. The general conference of 1833 took up the subject, and embodied what had been the prevailing sentiment of the church, in the following rule:

"We, the United Brethren in Christ, do believe that the practice of swearing, either by the Bible, or in the name of Almighty God, is contrary to the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says, *Swear not at all*; and that the mode of testifying to the truth, when required so to do in a legal form by way of affirmation, is on us solemnly, conscientiously, and fully binding before God, to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Entertaining these conscientious views in respect to civil oaths, administered by a magistrate, it was perfectly natural that United Brethren should be repulsed by the horrible oaths administered in Masonic lodges. When required, as a condition of admission to a lodge, to solemnly swear that they would "ever conceal, and never reveal any part or parts, art or arts, point or points, of the secrets, arts and mysteries of Freemasonry,—that they would not write, print, stamp, stain,



cut, carve, indent, paint, or engrave them—so as to make the most intimate friend acquainted with them, under no less a penalty than to have their ‘throats cut across,’ their ‘tongues torn out by the roots,’ and their dead bodies ‘buried in the rough sands of the sea,’” they wisely shrank back in horror and disgust. A man who takes the entered apprentices’ oath,\* and the other oaths administered at each new degree, must acquire a wonderful facility in hard swearing.

But they did not confine their reprobation to secret *oath*-bound societies. They regarded the promise, whether with an oath or upon honor, “not to make known matters which were to be subsequently communicated; or to obey a code of laws with which they were not acquainted,” as a sinful promise, because they could not be sure that the law of God, which is above all human laws, and all obligations to human organizations, would not require them to divulge those very matters. Such cases have occurred.†

\* See Bernard’s Light on Masonry, page 27.

† Elder DAVID BERNARD was brought by his conscience to this very point. He says :—“ Are the oaths of Freemasonry then congenial to the duties which I owe to God and my fellow-men ? If they are, I most certainly am bound to keep them ; if not, to break them. But Freemasonry, as a system, is dark, unfruitful, selfish, demoralizing, blasphemous, murderous, anti-republican, and anti-Christian—opposed to

And they could not be certain that the unknown laws of the secret fraternity would not come into conflict with the laws of God, and hence, if obeyed, involve them in sin. They regarded such oaths and promises as also "ensnaring and enslaving to the conscience" and as making themselves, in reality, the servants of men. It is true, that the advocates of secret societies endeavor to evade the force of these objections by saying that before the oath or promise is administered, the candidate is informed that there is nothing in the institution which will require him to violate his duties to himself, his country, or his God. But by whom is this assurance given? By men, to say the least, fallible men; and in the nature of the case they can not know that such is the fact. When they give this assurance to a candidate they only give their opinion; and it may be an erroneous one. What folly, then, for a man who is responsible to God, whose conscience should remain perfectly free, and whose tongue should be ever unloosed to

the glory of God, and the good of mankind; and hence, in bursting asunder the bonds of the fraternity, and publishing their secrets to the world, I am doing no more than is required by the principles of moral obligation, and fulfilling the duties which I owe to God and my fellow men."

speak for the right, to bind his conscience to a secret order, and allow that order to tie his tongue, in respect to acts of the greatest importance, until that tongue shall be palsied in death! The consciences of the United Brethren in Christ could not endure such oaths or promises.

Moreover, the fact that Freemasonry, the secret society generally known during the period under consideration, ignores the divine claims of Jesus, and places his holy religion on a level with Judaism, Mohammedanism and Deism, could not fail to repel the Brethren, to whom Jesus was the Alpha and the Omega. How could they fraternize with those who reject the Lord, or who follow the false prophet; and how could they find it in their hearts purposely to omit the name of Jesus in their prayers?\*

\* The proof that Masonry does exclude the name of Jesus from its prayers is abundant. The following correspondence, copied from the *Mirror and Keystone*, a Masonic publication, issued at Philadelphia, is in point:—

TERRE HAUTE, IND., June 15th, 1859.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER :—It would give me and a goodly number of brethren great pleasure, if you would discuss, in your valuable and wide-spread *Mirror and Keystone*, the following question : *Is it Masonic to have a strictly Christian prayer at opening and closing a lodge,—such a prayer as all Masons can not conscientiously join?* I suppose you have answered this question often, but not in your paper since I became a reader of it. The circumstances which cause me to ask this question are these. Several of our brethren, who are Christian minis-



Finally, a most weighty reason for the position taken by the United Brethren in Christ in regard to these societies is this, that in no other way can the church preserve its independence. A church, they believe, should suffer no bands of servitude to be placed upon her neck, whereby her freedom would be compromised. She is to be God's untrammelled servant. But it is well

ters, are, whenever present at the opening or closing of a lodge, requested by the W. M., to offer prayer, which request they always comply with, closing their prayers with, "*for the sake of Jesus Christ,*" etc., which form of prayer, although obnoxious to several of the brethren of the Jewish faith, is still adhered to, in spite of their protests, whenever one of the minister brothers chances to be in the lodge at the opening and closing of the same. Our Jewish brethren contend that the prayer in the opening or closing is a part of the ceremony of the opening and closing of a lodge, and as such a Masonic ceremony, it ought to be Masonic, *i. e.*, of universal application. I have no doubt, sir, that you will handle this question, which involves such a great Masonic principle, with your usual ability, supported by ancient and modern Masonic authority.

## REPLY.

The question submitted to us by our correspondent, is one that has long been settled by enlightened Masonic opinion, as well as by the Constitution of Masonry; and the reverend brethren, who, by their invocations in a Masonic lodge, address their petitions to any other than the Supreme Being, the creator of heaven and earth, violate the plainest principles of Masonry. It is almost superfluous to reply to the question, because the prayers referred to conflict with the universality of Masonry, which must be patent to every Mason who has the least knowledge of the principles upon which the Masonic order is based. \* \* \* All invocations in a Masonic lodge must be addressed to God, and to God only. Any thing that conflicts with the universality of Masonry is wrong.

known that churches which admit members of secret orders to their communion, dare not either in the pulpit or through the press permit a decent freedom of opinion. Every mouth must be stopped. Secret combinations may drive away the members of the household of faith from the altar of their own church, and the minister from the grave of one of his own people; and yet not one word of remonstrance is suffered. Ministers in those bound churches have been heard to say,—“We know these societies are wrong, but we dare not say a word.” The Brethren have maintained a position of independence, and may boldly utter their honest convictions without asking permission from a secret oath-bound society. God be praised that this church has never submitted its neck to the galling yoke of servitude!

In the autumn of 1826, a few months only after the Miami conference had adopted the vigorous measures to preserve the purity of the church to which reference has been made, it “became known in the vicinity of Batavia, N. Y., that William Morgan, a mechanic of that village, was about to publish a volume exposing the secrets of the

order of Freemasons. While the rumor was spreading through the adjacent country, the community was electrified by tidings that Morgan had been seized one evening, forcibly abducted and carried off, no one could say whither. Excitement naturally ensued and diffused itself; committees of vigilance and safety were formed; and an investigation initiated which resulted in tracing the abductors and their victim to westward upon the Ridge Road to Fort Niagara, near Lewiston, N. Y., whence it ultimately appeared that Morgan had been taken forcibly out upon Lake Ontario in a boat, and sunk in its depths. The persons by whose aid he was rapidly and quietly conveyed, in a carriage drawn by relays of horses, from Batavia to Fort Niagara (a distance of over a hundred miles), were said to have been [and were] Masons, while members of the order on every side were heard to justify the presumed outrage; saying that if Morgan had been treated as was alleged, it was no more than he richly deserved."\*

All efforts to bring the murderers of Morgan to justice were effectually baffled, and it was "judicially established, by the



testimony of seceding Masons, that oaths were administered to and taken by those admitted to the Masonic lodges—at least in certain of the higher degrees,—that disqualified them from serving as jurors in any case where a brother Mason of like degree was a party, and his antagonist was not. The judges who so decided were not of the anti-masonic party.”\* This terrible murder, and its obstinate concealment and justification, created great opposition to Freemasonry; and for a time the whole country was convulsed with excitement. Many lodges surrendered their charters. Morgan’s Revelations, which cost him his life, were published, and hundreds of seceding Masons, of undisputed veracity, testified to their truthfulness. At one time one hundred men who had been Freemasons, some of them far advanced in its mysteries, met at Le Roy, New York, and adopted the following declaration:

“We are opposed to Freemasonry because we believe:

“It exercises jurisdiction over the persons and lives of the citizens of this republic.

“It arrogates to itself the right of pun-

\* New American Cyclopaedia.

ishing its members for offenses unknown to the laws of this or any other nation.

“It requires the concealment of crime, and protects the guilty from punishment.

“It encourages the commission of crime, by affording the guilty facilities to escape.

“It affords opportunities for the corrupt and designing to form plans against the government, and the lives and characters of individuals.

“It assumes titles and dignities incompatible with a republican government, and enjoins an obedience to them derogatory to republican principle.

“It destroys all principles of equality, by bestowing its favors on its own members, to the exclusion of all others, equally meritorious and deserving.

“It creates odious aristocracies, by its obligations to support the interests of its members, in preference to others of equal qualifications.

“It blasphemes the name, and attempts the personification of the Great Jehovah.

“It prostitutes the sacred Scriptures to unholy purposes to subserve its own secular and trifling concerns.

“It weakens the sanctions of morality and

religion, by the multiplication of profane oaths and immoral familiarity with religious forms and ceremonies.

"It discovers in its ceremonies an unholy commingling of divine truth with impious human inventions.

"It destroys a veneration for religion and religious ordinances, by the profane use of religious forms.

"It substitutes the self-righteousness and ceremonies of Masonry, for real religion and the ordinances of the gospel.

"It promotes habits of idleness and intemperance, by its members neglecting their business to attend its meetings and drink its libations.

"It accumulates funds at the expense of indigent persons, to the distress of their families, too often to be dissipated in rioting and pleasure, and in its ceremonies and exhibitions.

"It contracts the sympathies of the human heart for all the unfortunate, by conferring its charities to its own members; and promotes the interest of the few at the expense of the many."

This movement gave additional strength to the anti-secret society sentiment of the



church; and, as some difficulty had been experienced in the west, the general conference which convened in 1829 adopted the following resolution, to be inserted as a rule of discipline: "Resolved, that in no way or manner, nor in any sense of the word, shall Freemasonry be approved or tolerated in our church; and that should any member of our church, who may now be a Freemason, continue to attend their lodges, or as a Freemason, attend and take part in their processions; or if any member join the Freemasons, such member, by such an act, excludes himself from membership in our church."

This rule was adopted by a unanimous vote of the conference, and was supported by none more firmly than by John McNamar and Aaron Farmer, both members of the conference, and both practically acquainted with the inside life and workings of the institution. The success with which the church has sustained this position will be noticed in subsequent pages of this work.

On the 15th of May, 1829, the FIFTH GENERAL CONFERENCE met in Fairfield Co., Ohio. Members present:—Christian Newcomer and Henry Kumler, bishops.

*Hagerstown conference*:—William Brown, Thomas Miller, Henry Burtner, John Zahn, Jacob Erb, Simon Dreisback, John Hendricks, Ezekiel Boring.

*Miami conference*:—Henry Joseph Fry, Andrew Zeller, John McNamar, John Denham, Jacob Flickinger, John Fetherhuff, Geo. Bonebrake, Aaron Farmer.

*Muskingum conference*:—John Crum, John Hildt, and John Bash.

*Scioto conference*:—Joseph Hoffman, John Coons, Geo Benedum, James Kinney, Elijah Collins, James Ross, John Russel. In all, twenty-eight.

Several changes were made in the boundaries of conferences. A circuit had been formed in the Sandusky country, which had been connected with the Scioto conference. It was resolved that this circuit be attached to the Muskingum conference. The western line of the State of Ohio was made the western boundary of the Miami conference; the church west of that line was constituted a conference, and called Indiana conference.

"The committee appointed to divide the Hagerstown conference reported that said district shall in future consist of Virginia and the counties of Washington and Alle-

ghany in Maryland; and that the remaining part of said district shall constitute a new one, to be called Harrisburg district." Subsequently these names were changed, the former to Virginia and the latter to Pennsylvania. It was decided that presiding elders should be elected annually. The rule adopted in relation to Freemasonry has already been noticed. C. Newcomer and H. Kumler, sen., were re-elected general superintendents.

One thing more which occupied a portion of the attention of the general conference of 1829 deserves a passing notice. About the year 1824 an exciting controversy was commenced in the M. E. church, in relation to church government; and immediately after the rise of the general conference of that year, a meeting of reformers was held in Baltimore, at which it was determined to publish a periodical entitled, "Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the M. E. Church." The meeting also resolved itself into a "Union Society," and recommended that similar societies be organized in all parts of the United States, in order to ascertain the number of persons in the M. E. church friendly to a change in her



government, which would divide the legislative, executive and judicial powers of the church between the ministry and laity.

In 1827 another general convention was held in Baltimore, composed of ministers and laymen, elected by the Union Societies, which prepared a memorial to the general conference to meet in 1828, "praying that the government of the church might be made representative, and more in accordance with the mutual rights of the ministers and people." "To this memorial the general conference replied, in a circular, claiming for the itinerant ministers an exclusive divine right to the same unlimited and unamenable power, which they had exercised over the church since 1784." The reformers, losing all hope of a change in the government of the church, called another general convention, which met in Baltimore Nov. 12th, 1828, and organized a provisional government for what were termed the "Associated Methodist churches."\*

As a representative of this newly formed church, Mr. Collins presented himself before our fifth general conference.

\* In November, 1830, the new church was fully organized, under the name of *The Methodist Protestant Church*.

He was kindly received, and addressed the conference in relation to a union of the two churches. The conference took up the subject, and appointed a committee to prepare a letter to be sent to the church above named by its delegate, Mr. Collins. The letter, as prepared by the committee, and adopted by the conference, reads as follows:

"BELOVED BRETHREN:—Your friendly and brotherly communication has been delivered to us by your messenger, Bro. Collins, and is received by us in the same friendly and brotherly spirit in which it was communicated.

"Dear Brethren! to increase brotherly love and Christian fellowship toward all the children of God, always has been, and, we hope, will continue to be, the principle by which we are actuated; and upon this principle we give you the hand of fellowship.

"The proposition made to us by your messenger has been duly considered, and its importance acknowledged; but, dear brethren, if you have made yourselves acquainted with our discipline and form of church government, you will readily perceive that this body has no legal power to act on the

proposition of your messenger. The members of this body are elected by the members of our society; \* \* and our constituents are as yet uninformed of the request made by your messenger to us; and of course we are not able now to ascertain their opinions and views on the subject.

"In a case of such importance we do not consider it prudent to act without special instruction from our constituents upon the subject. We have therefore to decline your friendly invitation to send delegates to your conference at the present time and under the present circumstances.

"That the Great Head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, may make you instrumental in his hands in the salvation of many souls, is the sincere prayer of your brethren in Christ."

A very friendly reply to this letter was sent to the Miami conference, at its session in May, 1830. Much pleasure was expressed with the contents of the letter from the United Brethren general conference. But these friendly interchanges were not long continued. The Reformers had introduced some popular elements into their government; but unfortunately, slaveholding was not prohibited; the



principle of caste was encouraged; and it was not long until the slave power fastened disgraceful shackles on the press of the young church, put manacles upon its strongest men, and, in the general conference, voted down a resolution that "slavery is an evil under some circumstances." A division of the church, or rather a secession of the northern portion of it, has been the result. The connection of the Reformers with secret oath-bound associations formed another barrier to union.

## CHAPTER X.

THE OLD CONFERENCE—BURTNER—CRUM—  
THE BENEVOLENT FUND SOCIETY—ADAM  
LEHMAN—DIVISION OF THE OLD CONFERENCE—CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER, HIS CHARACTER AND DECEASE.

The reader has already traced the history of the old conference from the period of its organization in 1789, up to 1820. He has seen the venerable men who formed it, one by one, exchanging the cross for the crown. He has observed with pleasure the expansion of the work, and the establishment of two conferences in the west, as offshoots from the old conference. Now let us turn, with affectionate interest, to the old parent conference again, see how it fares with her, and trace her history for a few years more. We have seen that in 1820 the conference was composed of about fifty preachers, six of whom were itinerant, four circuits, and four presiding elder's districts;

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and that the whole sum paid for preaching amounted to \$371 40.

At the session of the conference in 1821 some valuable additions were made to the ministry. Among those admitted were CHRISTIAN TROUP, one of the pioneers of the church in the far west, and HENRY BURTNER. Of Mr. Troup notice is taken in a subsequent chapter, in connection with the rise of the church in Iowa. Mr. Burtner\* was born in Cumberland county, Pa., A. D. 1800. In his eighteenth year he was converted at one of the "great meetings" held by the United Brethren in the Cumberland Valley. Soon after his conversion he began to speak in public, and in his twenty-first year was received into the old conference, and appointed to regular work in the traveling connection. In the first day of his twenty-first year he left his father's house for his field of labor; and for three years he traveled in the mountainous regions of Pennsylvania, and in portions of Virginia and Maryland. His education and preparations for the pulpit being German, and the demand for preaching, in the English language, between 1825

\* Most of the facts of this sketch are condensed from a sketch in *Unity Magazine*, by Rev. J. Markwood.



and 1830, in all the portions of the church contiguous to him (as he was now married and settled in Virginia), being largely increased, he gradually retired from the itineracy. However, he served many years in the capacity of a local presiding elder. In 1829 he was a delegate to the general conference; also in 1849. He was a pleasant companion in the social circle, and in hospitality was rarely excelled. The itinerant preacher always found a hearty welcome at his house and handsome aid from his purse. Never was one truer to the pledge implied in the question: "Are you willing, as much as is in your power, to assist in upholding the itinerant plan?" Mr. B. was above the medium size, and he had a fine face, a remarkably penetrating eye, and was a preacher of depth and power. After much and long-continued suffering, he died in Rockingham Co., Va., Jan. 5th, 1857, having been in the ministry thirty-six years. Two years prior to his death, a daughter, Mary by name, to whom he was greatly attached, died in faith and hope; and when he was dying, as if he saw the spirit of his child near him, he exclaimed, "Mary, Mary!"

In 1823 CHRISTIAN CRUM, one of the oldest

and best ministers of the conference died. Of this venerable father in the United Brethren ministry, and Henry, his brother, Henry Smith, of the M. E. church, in a letter to the author, written in his ninety-first year, says: "The Crums, Christian and Henry, I knew from my boyhood. They were our neighbors. They were twin brothers, and so much alike that in early life it was difficult to tell them apart. They were raised, I believe, in the German Reformed church, but destitute of the power of Godliness. They prayed and preached in the German. In the work of the ministry Christian took the lead, and always kept it. I never shall forget the good and fatherly advice he gave me when I was yet a wild boy, and the impression it made on my youthful mind. They both became itinerants. Christian traveled pretty extensively, and was an acceptable and useful preacher. I revere his memory. He was much beloved. Henry was a good man, and useful. His house was open to the English (Methodist) as well as German (United Brethren) preachers. There I heard the venerable Otterbein preach; and, among others, received the sacrament at his hands."

Christian Crum was a member of the first general conference.

In 1821 the "BENEVOLENT FUND" movement was originated in the old conference. A committee, consisting of Jacob Baulus, John Snyder, Jos. Hoffman, Abraham Mayer, Geo. Guething, and John Hershey, to whom the subject was referred, reported to the conference the following resolutions:

"Resolved by the ministry of the United Brethren in Christ, in conference assembled, that there is great necessity of forming a society, to create a fund from which the traveling, and the worn out, and superannuated ministers shall be supported.

"Resolved, That in every circuit agents shall be appointed to invite persons to join this society and to get subscriptions.

"Resolved, That a committee be appointed by this conference, to draw up a Constitution for this benevolent society, and lay the same before the next annual conference.

"Resolved, That to help those now in need a subscription be circulated in this conference room.

"Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the general conference, and to the annual conferences in Pennsylvania and Ohio."



The report was adopted by a unanimous vote, and J. Baulus and J. Hildt were constituted a committee to draft a Constitution.

At the conference in 1822 the constitution prepared by the committee was presented, and adopted; and J. Braiser of Chambersburg, V. Daub and J. Cronise of Frederick, A. Newcomer of Washington, S. Huber of Rocky Spring, J. Wenger of Franklin, and Geo. Martin of Hagerstown, were constituted a board of trustees to manage the funds of the society. The presiding elders reported that they had secured about \$400 for the society during the year; and they were instructed by the conference to continue their efforts.

In 1826 an auxiliary Benevolent Society was chartered in Ohio, of which Jos. Hoffman, D. Mechlin, S. Hiestand, L. Kramer, S. Meyers, G. Benedum, and John Coons were the trustees.

The Benevolent Society aimed to create a fund, the interest of which should afford relief to the needy ministers and their widows and orphans. Persons might become members of the society for life, by the payment of \$10, or for a single year by the payment of the interest of \$10. By

means of subscriptions and donations quite a large capital stock was accumulated. But it soon became evident, as the number of laborers in the vineyard increased, that other, and more effectual means, were necessary, in order to supply the wants of the rapidly-multiplying worn-out ministers, and of their helpless widows and orphans; and at the general conference of 1853 measures were adopted, looking toward the dissolution of the old society, and providing for an equal distribution of its stock among the several conferences, and for the reference of the whole matter of provision for the class of persons named to the annual conferences.

In the year 1823 ADAM LEHMAN, a member of this conference at its organization in 1789, died, having attained to his ninety-first year. He was an early co-laborer of Otterbein, and a devoted Christian minister for many years. As his name has frequently been confounded with that of his son, we will add in this place, that he was succeeded in the ministry by his son, JACOB ADAM LEHMAN, who was one of the first United Brethren itinerant preachers in the Miami conference. Jacob Adam, like his father, was a man of unimpeachable character, and

of deep piety. He enjoyed for many years the full assurance of faith. Possessing a vigorous constitution and unimpaired health, he toiled on to his 90th year in the Lord's vineyard. On the 30th of May, 1848, his sun of life, unobscured by a single cloud, set in glory. He also left a devoted son, who is still in the ministry.

In 1823 Jacob Erb and Gideon Smith; in 1825 John Zahn, A. Hershey, William R. Rhinehart; and in 1827 George Hiskey, were received into conference. These were all valuable accessions, as the reader will learn from subsequent chapters of this history.

At the conference which met in Chambersburg in 1825, thirty-five ministers were in attendance; and at the close of the examination the secretary writes: "Praise God, there was universal love among the brethren, and no complaint was made. God had been with the brethren, and blessed them on their different fields of labor."

At the general conference of 1829 the Harrisburg, or Pennsylvania conference, as it was afterwards called, was set off from the old conference; or, it may be nearer the truth to say that the old conference was divided. The general conference record is as follows:—



"Resolved, That the Hagerstown conference district be divided to the best advantage, and that the brethren, Hildt, Brown, Zahn, and Miller, constitute a committee for the purpose."

"The committee appointed to divide the Hagerstown conference district, reported that said district shall in future consist of the state of Virginia, and the counties of Washington and Alleghany in Maryland, and that the remaining part of the said district shall constitute a new one, to be called the Harrisburg district."

In March, 1830, the venerable old body assembled at Shopp's meeting-house, near Shiremanstown, Cumberland Co., Pa., to hold its last meeting. The names of seventy-six ministers were enrolled, fifty-eight of whom were in attendance.

For the first time in a long series of years, the familiar face of Newcomer was absent. A few weeks before, he had gone to be present with the Lord. "Love and unity," writes the secretary, "reigned in the conference." Near the close of the session it was

"Resolved, That in future Hagerstown conference shall have the old protocol (minutes), and that Harrisburg conference shall procure a new book." To this resolution it is added that "bishop Kumler gave to William Brown

\$2, with which he shall procure a new protocol for Harrisburg conference, and shall transcribe from the old into the new all proceedings of importance."

Thus was the original conference of the United Brethren in Christ, after an existence of forty-one years, divided,—the southern part retaining the old name, and the old protocol. The old name was soon exchanged for Virginia, and Harrisburg for Pennsylvania. Bidding the dear old conference an affectionate farewell, we shall make the acquaintance of her daughters and granddaughters, in whom will be seen, we are happy to know, the exalted virtues of the mother. Of the number of members in the old conference district, in 1830, we have no knowledge. It is evident, however, from such statistics as we have, that the work, during the ten years between 1820 and 1830, was carried forward successfully.

COMPARISON OF THE STATISTICS OF 1820  
AND 1830.

	Preachers.	Cir. and Sta.	Itinerants.	Paid for support of preaching.
1830	76	11	16	\$1,263 36
1820	51	4	6	371 40
Inc.	25	7	10	\$891 96

It has been already remarked that at the last annual meeting of the old conference Christian Newcomer was absent. This venerable Christian bishop finished his course on earth March 12th, 1830, in the 82nd year of his age. He commenced preaching in 1787; was a member of the first conference in 1789; presided at the first conference in Ohio in 1810; was elected bishop for one year, in 1813, after the death of Boehm, and about six months prior to the decease of Otterbein; was ordained formally as an elder, by Mr. O., a few days previous to Mr. O.'s death; was re-elected bishop for three years by the conference in the east, in 1814; and was re-elected by the first general conference in 1815, and by each succeeding general conference, including that which met in 1829, the year preceding his death. He was a minister fifty-three years, and a general superintendent almost seventeen years.

Few ministers in America have performed more work in the Lord's vineyard. Entering the field at early dawn, he bore the burden and heat of the day, and rested not a moment, relaxed not a muscle, until the sun went down. For fifty-three years he was in his saddle almost daily, visiting and preach-



ing from house to house, from city to city, and from state to state. He was the messenger of salvation to multitudes in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio; and he also preached in Indiana, Kentucky, New York, and once visited Canada. Nineteen times he crossed the Alleghany mountains on horseback, after he had passed his sixty-first year.

A good German training at home had given him a vigorous constitution and habits of industry. He always kept a good horse, and knew how to take care of him, and to prize him. Hence, when well-mounted, as he always was, it mattered little about cold, rain, hail, snow, mud, or distance. He often rode all day, even after he had reached his three-score and ten, without meat or drink. On his nineteenth tour west, in his 81st year, he rode in one day fifty-two miles.

And never a word of complaint escaped his lips. He was a Christian hero of the noblest type. This fact beams from every page of his journal. He never pens a word of pious complaint about his trials; never imagines that he is making great sacrifices for the church, and is doing too much for the Lord. No, no. Storms, hunger, and weariness only make him the happier.

November 14th, 1821, he writes: "This day I rode, in a happy frame of mind, through wind and snow, from morning till night without any refreshment." October 2nd, 1826, when nearly eighty years old, he makes this note:—"I crossed the Juniata river, came to a very steep mountain, and with difficulty gained the summit, where I kneeled down, and offered up praises and thanksgiving to my Lord and Master for all his mercies, and remembered all my brethren in the ministry at a throne of grace. I believe my offering was acceptable in his sight, for I felt his gracious presence in my soul. Hallelujah! Glory, honor and praise be unto our God for ever!"

He was not what is commonly denominated a great preacher. Not blessed with a ready utterance, at times it seemed to be hard work for him to express his ideas. Mr. Otterbein was heard to say, "When I hear him I feel as if I wanted to help him." Yet he always succeeded in feeding the flock, and in reaching the hearts of sinners. He was mighty in prayer, by which we mean that he prevailed with God. Often did the Spirit's baptism come down in answer to his supplications; and often while he prayed for mourn-

ers did the light of life break in upon them. Once when Mr. Otterbein seemed on the point of dying, Mr. Newcomer entreated God that the disease might be rebuked, and that Mr. Otterbein might be spared; and his prayer was immediately answered.

Wherever he went he carried the revival spirit. While visiting families not unfrequently one, two and three of the number would be awakened and converted. "To-day," he says, "I visited A. Huber. Several neighbors collected together, and we began to sing and pray. The power of God came down. The mother of the house and daughter-in-law obtained peace. Bless the Lord!" Such notes are thickly interspersed through his journal.

He was none of your rough, odd men; none of your fighting, joking Cartwrights; but an earnest, kind-hearted, joyful, humble Christian, thinking little of himself, and sinking into the dust before God.

On his 76th birthday he writes:—"O thou merciful God! so many years hast thou borne with my infirmities; I pray thee to continue thy loving-kindness and mercy at this advanced period of my life." February 4th, 1827, he writes, "The Lord is gracious to



poor, unworthy me. For some time past I have been unusually happy, and able to rejoice in God my salvation. O, Lord, my all is thine; I offer myself up unto thee totally, and without reserve. Only continue unto me thy grace; and if consistent with thy holy will, let me continue in this happy frame of mind through life and death. Amen."

Four weeks after he had completed his last western tour, he writes: "I am still indisposed. Remained at home, engaged in reading and prayer. My loving Savior extended his loving-kindness to me in secret prayer, and blessed my poor soul so abundantly that it became impossible for me not to shout and praise the Lord aloud. Glory and honor be to his holy name forever: Hallelujah!"

Recovering partially, he made another visit to Virginia; thence to a camp-meeting at Boonsborough, Md.; thence to another camp-meeting in York Co., Pa.; thence to a Methodist camp-meeting at Hagerstown, Md.; the Sabbath following he is holding a sacramental meeting at Greencastle, Pa.; and thus he toils on until October 11th, five months before his decease, when he rests another Sabbath. He writes: "I remained home, engaged in reading and prayer. I found my soul particularly

drawn out to God in behalf of all my brethren in the ministry. I feel my feebleness increasing from day to day." Going out again he spends two weeks more in the vineyard, then returns home, prostrated. He now writes. "I am not able to leave my room, but glory to God! I can have sweet communion with him. Though solitary, I am not alone, for my Savior is still with me, and continues the best of friends. O! how blessed is the condition of aged people, when they know they have a reconciled God and Savior. Nothing am I more sorry of than that I have not served my Lord and Master more faithfully." On the 11th of November he writes: "I find that I am barely able to hold a pen to make this entry in my journal. \* \* Not many days are left unto me to live in this world. Soon the call will be, 'Give account of thy stewardship.' Bless the Lord, I am in no wise afraid to appear in his presence, for I know one who is my surety and has paid my debts."

Thus he lingered, sometimes confined to his room for weeks, then out at a sacramental or quarterly meeting, until March 2nd, when, after making an effort to go to Virginia, his strength failing him, he returned home.

On the 4th of March, he wrote this last paragraph in his journal: "I lay down my pen, and the Lord knows whether I shall be able to resume it again. The Lord's will be done. Amen. HALLELUJAH!" A day or two afterward his colleague, bishop Kumler, visited him, which gave him great joy. On the 12th of March, a few minutes before his decease, "he arose from his bed without any assistance, and, with those persons present in the room, presented himself at his bedside before that throne where he had formed a spiritual acquaintance with his blessed Lord and Master many years before. After the prayer was ended he again laid down, reclining his head on his pillow, drew breath but a few times, and calmly expired in the arms of his Savior and his God, in the full assurance of a blessed immortality. His whole countenance appeared to be a faithful mirror in which the serenity of mind and the peace within was depicted in faithful characters."\* Thus did this model evangelist and bishop enter into rest.

\* Journal, page 330.



## CHAPTER XI.

OUTGROWTHS OF THE OLD CONFERENCE—VIRGINIA, PARKERSBURG—J. J. GLOSSBRENNER—W. R. COURSEY—JACOB BACHTEL—J. MARKWOOD.

It has been already stated that the Virginia conference was formed by a division of the old conference in 1830; and that it retained the old name, Hagerstown, and the old records. Prior to 1833, however, Virginia, its present name, was assumed.

The first annual conference of the Virginia district assembled at Mill Creek, in Shenandoah Co., Va., April 27th, 1831. There were present at the opening of the session, twenty ministers, whose names follow:—H. Kumler, sen., bishop; W. R. Rhinehart, Henry Burtner, J. Krock, G. Patterson, Jacob Erb (of Pennsylvania), G. Guething, J. Zahn, W. Kinnear, W. Miller, P. Witzel, J. Rhinehart, J. Houck, G. Hoffman, N. Woodyard, J. Haney, H. Higgins, J. Haas, P. Harmon,

and W. Knott. Of the absent ministers no record is made in the minutes.

Soon after the conference was opened, a slender young man, not yet nineteen years of age, was presented as a candidate for license to preach, and was received, whose name has become, wherever the United Brethren are known, familiar as a household word. We refer to J. J. GLOSSBRENNER. We must pause in our narrative to give a brief sketch of his life and character.

Mr. Glossbrenner was born in Hagerstown, Md., July 24th, 1812. His parents were members of the Lutheran church, and of German extraction. At the early age of six years he was obliged, on account of the death of his father, to seek a home among strangers. When of sufficient age he went to the trade of a silversmith, in Hagerstown, where in his seventeenth year he was awakened and converted. After serving as a class-leader about a year, he received a license to exhort; and, in his nineteenth year, he was admitted into the Virginia conference, as already stated. He entered the itineracy at once, and was placed upon Hagerstown circuit. The following year he was sent to the Valley of Virginia, where

he was married. In 1834, although then scarce twenty-two years of age, he was elected presiding elder. He continued to itinerate in the Virginia conference, with constantly-increasing usefulness, from 1831 to 1845, a period of fourteen years. He was a delegate to the general conferences of 1837, 1841, and 1845. In 1845 he was elected bishop; and at each succeeding general conference since he has been re-elected. Being a plain, earnest preacher, a sound theologian in both head and heart, a good disciplinarian, and an excellent presiding officer; and possessing, withal a strong will, a forbearing temper, and indefatigable perseverance, he fills one's ideal of what a Christian bishop ought to be. Few men would better answer to the requirements specified in Titus i. 7-9.

Bishop Glossbrenner is about five feet ten inches in height, and is well built. His complexion is dark, eyes black, features regular, countenance and manners sincere and winning. Thirty years of constant itinerant work have left upon him their well known traces.

His admission into the Virginia conference, at its first session, and at a time,



too, when the demand for English itinerant laborers was exceedingly pressing, exerted no inconsiderable influence upon its prosperity, and by his unswerving adherence to the peculiar principles of the Gospel under circumstances which try men's souls, he has contributed greatly to the purity and success of the Virginia conference, and of the United Brethren church.

At the first session of this conference a very strong resolution against the distillation and sale of ardent spirits was introduced by W. R. Rhinehart, who always stood in the front ranks of the temperance reform, and passed. It was also decided, and very wisely too, that the itinerant preachers should only pay over to conference, for general distribution, the money they had received over and above the salary allowed by discipline. This was a move in the right direction.

The appointments of the traveling preachers were read as follows:

*Hagerstown circuit*—J. J. Glossbrenner, W. R. Rhinehart.

*Mechanicstown circuit*—W. Miller, G. Guething.

*Staunton and Woodstock circuits*—J. Zahn, N. Woodyard, J. Haney, J. Houck.

Thus, in 1831, did the Virginia conference set sail, to use a nautical phrase, with four circuits, eight itinerant, and about fifteen local preachers—twenty-three in all.

In 1833, among those received into the conference we find the names of J. M. HERSHEY, who is still an efficient minister in the St. Joseph, and G. RIMAL of the Virginia conference. These ministers have stood at their posts, as faithful watchmen, nearly thirty years.

As the church, up to this period, had no English hymn-book, except the collection issued by Mr. Antrim, the Virginia conference, in 1833, passed a resolution in favor of the publication of a new and improved collection, and constituted Mr. Rhinehart and Mr. Zahn a committee to examine any collection which might be offered them, or to prepare a new one. It was afterward arranged that the Pennsylvania conference should unite with the Virginia, in preparing and publishing a new hymn-book; and Jacob Erb was associated with Mr. Rhinehart, and the two constituted a compiling committee. A book was in due time prepared and published, which met the wants of the church for a number of years.

W. R. COURSEY, and G. A. SHUEY, both of whom have rendered efficient service in the conference, were admitted in 1833. Mr. Coursey is still in the effective itinerant ranks. He has served a number of years as presiding elder, and was a delegate to the general conferences of 1841 and 1857.

During the year 1833 the work in this conference was extended in various directions; and a new circuit, called South Branch, was formed, and traveled by J. M. Hershey.

In 1834 JACOB BACHTEL was added to the itinerant force of the conference; and from that period to the present, he has been a noble example of ministerial perseverance. As a circuit preacher, presiding elder, and pioneer missionary in Western Virginia, he has displayed those qualities which lend a peculiar charm to the character of a traveling preacher. Prompt, zealous, and industrious, he has accomplished, in his almost thirty years' itineracy, an amount of hard toil, much of it in mountainous districts, which has fallen to the lot of but few ministers. He contributed materially to the prosperity of the Virginia conference, which he represented in the general conferences of 1845, 1849, 1853, and 1857; and when the



Parkersburg conference was formed, although advanced in years, he identified himself with that laborious, but promising, field, where he is still employed in the effective itinerant ranks. Mr. Bachtel is a sound preacher.

The number of circuits in 1834 had increased to six, and the number of itinerant preachers to twelve. At the conference of this year, a resolution was introduced by W. R. Rhinehart, in favor of the publication of a religious newspaper, under the patronage of the conference, to be called the Union Messenger. The resolution was favorably received by the conference, and Mr. R. was encouraged to go forward with the enterprise. The Messenger made its appearance soon after conference; but as the general conference had, the year before, resolved to establish a paper, in which the whole church might be interested, it was, together with its subscription list, type, and editor, transferred to Circleville, O., where, in 1834, the Religious Telescope was issued.

In 1838 a thin, dark, wiry little man was received, who for more than twenty years has been an effective force in the conference, and in the church. We refer to JACOB MARKWOOD. Mr. Markwood was

born in Jefferson Co., Va., on Christmas, in 1818. In his tenth year he became the subject of deep convictions, and while a book containing the experiences of some English Wesleyan preachers melted his heart, a tract on the final damnation of the wicked caused him to tremble with fear, and to pray for mercy. At the age of thirteen he was put to work in a woolen-factory, under the care of an elder brother; and while thus employed he attended a revival meeting, during which, while kneeling at the mourner's bench, after a three day's struggle, he found, to use his own words, "inexpressible peace in Christ." This was in October, 1832. The converted factory boy soon felt it to be his duty to preach the Gospel; but his youth, and a sense of unfitness for the great work, deterred him from entering upon it, until his nineteenth year, when he accepted a license to exhort. This was in June, 1837. In September following he was licensed to preach, and commenced to travel with the preachers on their large circuits as an assistant.

In March, 1838, as above stated, he was received into the Virginia conference, and appointed to travel Hagerstown circuit, as a

colleague of William Knott, where he remained two years. Next he was sent to South Branch circuit, where he labored two years longer. In 1843 he was elected presiding elder, and placed upon Maryland district. 1854 and 1855 were spent in an agency for the missionary society. He has served his conference since 1843, almost continually as a presiding elder, on districts which require long, and hard journeys on horseback; and he has been a delegate to each general conference since 1845.

Few men, since 1838, have labored more zealously, or have made a more favorable impression for the cause of Christ. Mr. Markwood is a bold defender of the peculiarities of the United Brethren church; an indefatigable itinerant; a Christian of the finest mold; an eloquent and faithful preacher; and he is never happier than when in his saddle, climbing over the hills and mountains, on the way to a quarterly meeting.

With Glossbrenner, Markwood, Bachtel, and others of similar spirit, the United Brethren church in Virginia and Maryland has not only been able to hold its own, amid the most adverse influences, but it has had a healthy growth.



In 1857 all that part of the Virginia district west of the Alleghany mountains was constituted a new conference, and called Parkersburg conference. With a self-denying itineracy and a new field, this conference, from a small beginning, has quickly attained a respectable size and standing. We shall recur to it again in a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER XII.

OUTGROWTHS OF THE OLD CONFERENCE—  
PENNSYLVANIA, EAST PENNSYLVANIA, ALLE  
GHANY—J. ERB—G. MILLER—J. FOHL.

The northern portion of the old conference, first called the Harrisburg, but soon after the PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE, held its first annual session in Cumberland Co., Pa., in April, 1831. Thirty-one ministers were in attendance at the opening of the conference; and during the session five candidates for the ministry were authorized to preach,—making the whole number present thirty-six.

In 1833 the boundaries of this conference were extended westward to the Pennsylvania line, so as to include that portion of the church in Washington and Westmoreland counties, which, since 1818, had been under the care of the Muskingum conference. With this expansion of territory the Pennsylvania conference embraced the whole of the State

of Pennsylvania, and a small portion of Maryland. In 1835 this extensive field, or the portion of it cultivated by the United Brethren, was divided into eleven circuits, which were served by fifteen itinerant preachers, stationed as follows:

CARLISLE DISTRICT—J. Erb P. E.

*Carlisle circuit*, Jacob Ritter.

*York circuit*, Geo. Miller.

Jacob Rupp to travel through the circuits above named as a German preacher.

*Dauphin circuit*, D. Funkhouser.

*Lancaster*, Jacob Snider.

*Lancaster station*, Ezekiel Boring.

*Baltimore station*, Peter Hermon.

HUNTINGTON DISTRICT—J. Niman and J. Rider Presiding Elders.

*Huntington circuit*, F. Gilbert.

*Juniata circuit*, M. Lawson.

*Chambersburg circuit*, Martin Lohr.

*Clearfield circuit*, John Wallace.

*Westmoreland circuit*, G. StC. Hussey.

JACOB ERB, whose name stands at the head of the itinerant force, in the allotments of labor for 1835, was admitted into the old conference in 1823. The same year he entered the itinerant ranks. In 1825, in company with J. Christian Smith, he visited



Canada West, and that part of the State of New York which lies contiguous to the Niagara Falls. In 1827 he was appointed to travel a mission in the North, designated as the "New York Mission." Possessing the true missionary spirit, he traveled through portions of Western New York and Canada, part of the time afoot with his knapsack on his back, preaching Christ. He was well received, and succeeded in establishing a number of excellent societies in Erie county, New York, and Canada West. Between 1827 and 1837 he made occasional visits to this mission; but, as the conference seemed unwilling to prosecute the work, he was obliged to give it up in despair. Soon after this unjustifiable abandonment of a most promising field, it was entered by the Evangelical (sometimes called Albright) brethren, who were successful in winning hundreds, and even thousands of European, and other Germans, to Christ. The United Brethren, neglected by the Pennsylvania conference, generally united with the Evangelical Association. However, when the missionary board, a few years since, sent over laborers to Canada, some of the fruits of Mr. Erb's labors still remained.

In 1829 Mr. Erb was a delegate to the general conference; also in 1833, and 1837. In 1837 he was elected bishop, his colleagues being Samuel Hiestand and Henry Kumler, sen. In 1841 he was re-elected to the superintendency, H. Kumler, sen., John Coons, and H. Kumler, jun., being his colleagues.

In 1840 John Russel established a semi-monthly German paper in the city of Baltimore, called "Die Geschaeflige Martha," or "Busy Martha," a paper devoted to the cause of religion, generally, and specially to the interests of the United Brethren church. The first number was issued March 7th. At the general conference of 1841, this paper was received into the care of the church, and Bishop Erb was elected its Editor and Publisher. The first number of the "Martha," under Mr. Erb's management, was issued July 1st, 1841. He continued to edit and publish this paper until June 22d, 1842, when, for want of sufficient patronage, it was discontinued.

Since 1845 Mr. Erb has been variously employed, in the service of the church, as presiding elder, circuit preacher, missionary in Canada, and agent. A descendent, we believe, of the good old Mennonites, he ex

emplifies their economical habits, plainness of dress, simplicity, and hospitality.

Among the young men introduced into the Pennsylvania conference prior to 1840, we find the names of George Miller and John Fohl.

GEORGE MILLER began to itinerate in this conference in 1833, in the twenty-third year of his age; and from 1833, to 1851, he ranked among the most prominent and useful ministers in Pennsylvania. He served the Pennsylvania conference five years as a circuit preacher, three years as a presiding elder, and eleven years as a stationed preacher. During three of those years he was pastor of the Otterbein church in Baltimore, where he was obliged to apply himself to the study of the German, for up to the period of his appointment to this important charge, he had been but little conversant with that language. By the most persevering application to the language he became a correct and forcible German preacher. "I visited him several times," writes Mr. W. B. Wagner, "while he was in Baltimore; and he informed me that close application to the study of the German, and to pulpit preparations, had seriously affected his health, and had



brought him frequently near the gates of death." After honorably acquitting himself as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, in all the fields assigned him in the Pennsylvania conference, he emigrated to Iowa in 1851, and was stationed that year in Muscatine. In 1852, he was elected presiding elder, and in 1853 he was again stationed in Muscatine. He continued to labor, with impaired health however, until 1858, when he broke down completely, while on Lisbon station, and became the victim of severe bodily afflictions. He now retired to his home in Cedar Co., after twenty-six years of active service in the itineracy, with a faint hope that he might regain his health; but on the 8th of January, 1860, he closed his eyes upon the scenes of earth, and entered the world of bliss. He had reached his fiftieth year.

Mr. Miller's personal appearance was prepossessing, and his address pleasing. In the pulpit his gestures were easy and expressive; and his sermons clear, systematic, and forcible. To the ministry of the word, he gave his heart and life. "His labors in the Gospel," writes Mr. Wagner, "will live in the hearts of thousands in the east and in the

west." What more desirable or suitable monument for an ambassador of Jesus?

JOHN FOHL was born in Franklin Co., Pa., in 1815. His parents were Lutherans,—his father an elder in the church; but they both lived in ignorance of experimental religion until visited by two devoted and simple-hearted United Brethren local preachers, P. Habecker, and J. Dome. Yet it ought to be added that they diligently instructed their children in the Holy Scriptures. In his seventeenth year John was converted. "The evidence of pardon to me," using his own words, "was as clear as a sunbeam." Zeal for souls now induced him to appoint prayer-meetings in his neighborhood, at which he exhorted sinners to repentance. At these meetings he was instrumental in saving some souls. Through the influence of the Lutheran pastor he was sent to Gettysburg Theological Seminary, but he soon became satisfied that it was not the place for him. He left the seminary and returned home, with the purpose to devote himself, almost exclusively, to the study of the Scriptures.

In the spring of 1835, moved with pity for the poor and outcast in the mountainous regions of Pennsylvania, he resolved to "try

the Spirit." A two-month tour among the mountains satisfied him that he was called of God to preach; and in 1836 he was received into the Pennsylvania conference, and appointed to Clearfield circuit—a circuit which embraced a wild, romantic region. The streams were generally without bridges, and wild cats, and wolves, and panthers abounded. The people were poor, and many of them wild, but they were kind. His next circuit was Washington, in western Pennsylvania. During this year he extended his work into Green Co., Pa. "The people in this region I found exceedingly rude," writes Mr. F., "yet every cabin door was open for our reception. They often came to preaching through the forest from five to six miles, carrying their guns with them, which they would stack in front of the cabin during divine service." After two years service in the mountains and in western Pennsylvania, Mr. F. was placed on Chambersburg circuit, having J. S. Kessler as a colleague. While he labored at Chambersburg, a revival of remarkable power was experienced. Near one hundred persons were converted, and among the number several who have since become excellent ministers.



The year following the great revival Chambersburg was made a station, and Mr. Fohl was placed in charge of it. In 1840 he was elected presiding elder, and placed on Chambersburg district, where he remained three consecutive years. He continued to labor in the Pennsylvania and East Pennsylvania conferences with marked success until 1853, when he removed to Indiana, where he has since been engaged, principally, in the Sunday-school cause.

JACOB WINTER was probably the most efficient pioneer evangelist employed by the Pennsylvania conference in the Western part of the State. He was born in Washington Co., Pa., Sept. 16th, 1780, embraced religion in 1801, and received license to preach, from the old conference, in 1808. "The United Brethren church in western Pennsylvania," writes Mr. J. Fohl, "was established principally through his instrumentality. For many years he labored extensively, catechising the youth, preaching the Gospel, and establishing churches. He was a man of warm heart, good talents, deep piety, and ardent zeal. He spoke the German and English languages with almost equal fluency. Many souls were won to Christ as seals to his

ministry. I shall never forget the tears and the admonitions of that man of God." He died October 12th, 1843, in the triumphs of faith, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, having been a minister of Jesus Christ thirty-five years.

In 1838 the conference met in Wormleysburg, Cumberland Co., Pa., to hold its eighth annual session. Ninety-eight preachers were enrolled at the opening of the session, and nine applicants for license, were authorized to preach, and received into conference, making in all one hundred and seven. This was, without doubt, the largest conference in the connection; and every thing goes to prove that great prosperity had attended the laborers in the vineyard. Only seven years had passed since the division of the old conference; and it now became necessary to set off a new conference from the Pennsylvania conference. Toward the close of the Wormleysburg conference, it was asked:

*Question.* Where, and when, shall our next conference be held?

*Answer.* At Lebanon, Pa., on the second Monday in March, 1839.

*Question.* Where, and when, shall the Alleghany conference be held?

*Answer.* At Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland county, Pa., on the last Monday in March, 1839.

It does not appear from the minutes of the general conference of 1837 that any action was taken at that conference in relation to the formation of a new conference in Pennsylvania. On the contrary, it may be inferred, from a resolution adopted near the close of the session, in relation to the number of delegates each conference would be entitled to send to the general conference of 1841, that a new conference was not set off in 1837.\*

"We conclude," says Mr. Hanby, "that the Pennsylvania conference set off the Alleghany conference by mutual consent of its members, there being at that time no rule of discipline forbidding such a course. The same course appears to have been adopted by the Indiana conference, in setting off the Wabash conference in 1834." Thus in 1838 we have three conferences on the territory

\* The general conference agreed that each conference district should send the following number of delegates to the next ensuing general conference:

Pennsylvania, 4; Virginia, 2; Scioto, 4; Miami, 3; Wabash, 2; Indiana, 3; Muskingum, 2; Sandusky, 2. Total, 22.—*Extract from Minutes.*



covered by the old conference alone up to 1830.

The first session of the Alleghany conference was held at Mt. Pleasant, in March, 1839. Bishop Erb presided. The new conference was divided into five circuits, embraced in one presiding elder's district. Twenty-nine members of conference were enrolled at the commencement of the session, and four applicants for license to preach were received, making thirty-three in all. J. R. SITMAN, a devoted and faithful itinerant minister, was the first presiding elder. The growth of the Alleghany conference, from its organization in 1839, to the present period, has been highly encouraging. It is now one of the larger conferences, and has an able and effective ministerial force.

Going back again to the Pennsylvania conference, we find it still favored with great prosperity. In 1844 ten candidates for the ministry were received on probation; and in 1845 the conference had eighty-three ministers, local and traveling, three presiding elder's districts, and twenty-one circuits. The work by this time had again become so large that another conference might, with propriety, be set off; and accordingly, at

the general conference of 1845, the EAST PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE was formed.

Now we have, instead of the old conference of 1830, five vigorous conferences east of the Pennsylvania line; and, that we may the better appreciate this rapid growth, the fact of the constant drain made upon the east, both of ministers and members, must be considered. The west is debtor to the east for a large number of excellent members and able ministers.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE SCIOTO CONFERENCE—COONS, MONTGOMERY, VANDEMARK, AMBROSE, HASTINGS, KINNEY, HANBY, EDWARDS, L. DAVIS.

It has already been stated that in 1824 the Miami conference was divided, the eastern portion taking the name of Scioto. The session of this parent conference of the west, prior to the division, appears to have been one of great religious interest. After the examination of the preachers had been concluded, Bishop Hoffman delivered to them a very weighty and soul-stirring address, in which he particularly charged them to be careful in the reception of members into the church, and to guard vigilantly against the admission of those who have not an evidence of sins forgiven. "Had you been there," writes father DeWitt, "and witnessed the piety, the zeal, and the glowing love which seemed to animate every bosom, you would have thought yourself in the suburbs of the upper sanctuary."



The Scioto conference held its first session in June 1825, in Fairfield Co., O. Its territory embraced the best cultivated portion of the State; and, at its organization, it was favored with an excellent class of itinerant ministers. Notice has already been taken of a number of them. It should also be stated that in 1823, two years prior to the division of the Miami conference, JOHN COONS was admitted into the itineracy; and when that division was made he identified himself with the Scioto conference.

Mr. Coons was born in Martinsburg, Va., Oct. 25th, 1797, and was brought to Christ in 1821, through the instrumentality of Jacob Antrim. He soon began to preach, and in 1822 was received into the conference. In 1823 he entered the itineracy, and was placed on Washington circuit. The next year he traveled Adelpia circuit; and thus, for nearly thirty-eight years his name has been enrolled on the itinerant list. He was a delegate to the general conferences of 1829-'33. After 1836 he served a number of years as presiding elder. In 1837 he was again a delegate to general conference, also in 1841, at which conference he was elected bishop. He filled the office for four years, after which

he entered again upon the more pleasant duties of a circuit and stationed preacher.

At the session of the Miami conference in 1824 JOSHUA MONTGOMERY was, "after examination, cordially received," and placed upon a circuit in the Scioto conference. Thirty-seven years of unswerving devotion to the Lord's cause, the most of the time in the itineracy, has justified the cordiality with which he was received into conference. Being a member of the Scioto conference at its organization, and filling, during the larger part of the time, the office of presiding elder, he may well be regarded as one of its fathers; and it is a fact that no small share of the prosperity of the church, embraced within that district, must be attributed to the blessing of God upon his labors.

When he first entered the ministry he labored very unwillingly, and only preached from a stern sense of duty. Conversing with a brother minister upon this point he said, with much emphasis. "If it were not preach or be damned I never would preach another sermon!"

His friend answered with astonishment, "Why, Joshua, do you love God?" It was a word in season. The Spirit fastened con-

viction upon his heart; and from that hour he rested not till he obtained a victory, and could even thank God for the privilege of preaching Christ. From that time forward his labors were blessed as they never had been before.

He was a member of the general conference of 1841, and of each succeeding general conference; and his gentlemanly deportment, frank and bold expression of sentiments, firm attachment to the doctrine and discipline of the church, forcible, and often eloquent, address, and thorough earnestness, have given to him a very decided and salutary influence in all those quadrennial assemblies.

In person Mr. Montgomery is short, and thick set. He has a fine forehead, and his heavy eyebrows give him a look of severity; yet no kinder heart ever beat. Thirty-seven years of persevering service in the ministry have not brought wealth, nor even a competence; but they have sprinkled his head with gray, and made his step feeble; yet the old soldier is still at his post.

ELIAS VANDEMARK was added to the itinerant force in 1829, the year that the lamented Steward went to his reward. With a good voice, great zeal, a warm heart, and



deep attachment to the church, Mr. Vandemark, through evil report and good report, toiled for the spread of religion in the Scioto conference for a period of twenty-five years; and, during the quarter of a century of his active labors as a minister, he won many souls to Christ. During the few past years age and infirmities have placed him on the superannuated list. Poverty has been, and is still, his portion. O how many of our dear fathers in the ministry, being poor, like the Master, have made many rich.

WILLIAM AMBROSE was identified with the Scioto conference from its organization up to 1850. He was born in Maryland, in 1770; embraced religion in Virginia in 1789; was licensed to preach in 1792; and, in 1808, was authorized to administer all the ordinances. In 1812 he made an extensive preaching tour through portions of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky, in company with bishop Newcomer. In 1815 he removed from Virginia to Highland county, Ohio; and in 1819 Nathaniel Havens took up an appointment at his house. The following year, under the labors of John DeWitt and Henry Bonebrake, a revival of religion was promoted in his neighborhood,

which resulted in the organization of an excellent church.

Mr. Ambrose served a number of years as a local presiding elder, and to the period of his death was diligently engaged in whatever work the Lord of the vineyard required at his hands.

Bishop Edwards relates of him the following anecdote: "In preaching a sermon at the Scioto conference on the Call to the Ministry, he took occasion to refer to his own experience, stating that soon after his conversion some of his friends wished him to attend college, in order to prepare himself for the ministry. 'But,' said he, in his peculiarly dry way, 'if I had gone I expect I should have come out as Aaron's gold came out of the fire.'"

On the 23d of August, 1850, he died in holy triumph. Two of his sons, Matthias and Lewis, grandsons of Christian Crum, are also worthy ministers, now of the Illinois conference.

MATTHIAS, the eldest son, entered the Scioto conference in 1833, since which time, as circuit preacher, and presiding elder, he has rendered important service to the cause of evangelical religion. He is a man of blameless

life, and, although humble and retiring, an unfaltering advocate and defender of the truth. He was a member of the general conferences of 1845, 1849, and 1853.

WILLIAM HASTINGS deserves notice as a distinguished minister in this conference. He was born in New Hampshire; embraced religion in Vermont, but did not unite with any church; emigrated to Ohio in 1813; and, in 1828, joined the Scioto conference, and entered the itinerant ranks. Bishop Edwards, who knew him well, says of him: "He was a man of good information and excellent sense, an extraordinary preacher and a first-rate counsellor. His remarks in debate were often sharp and cutting to his peers, but he was always on the side of mercy toward the fallen or the accused. The following anecdote is illustrative of his general course in dealing with accused brethren:

"A quarterly conference minister on the circuit on which Mr. H. lived was accused of immoral conduct. A proposition was made to the conference to appoint a committee to wait on the offending brother, and report to the next quarterly conference. One of the ministers on the circuit, a young man full of zeal and anxious for a revival,



thinking it would never do to wait a whole quarter for final action, urged that something ought to be done *immediately*, giving as a reason that the *cause* was in danger. Mr. H., arose and replied, with a sarcastic, Yankee twang, 'The cause, the *cause!* the young brother seems very much concerned about the cause. The cause is God's, and the gates of hell can't prevail against it. Let us do right, and give the brother a chance for his life. God will take care of the cause.' This was a settler; but it taught the young preacher a much-needed lesson, which is still remembered. And further to vindicate the wisdom of the course pursued, God poured out his Spirit, and a powerful revival followed near the vicinity of the accused brother's residence before the three months had expired."

During his last illness he said, "If I had my life to live over again, I would preach as long as I could speak ten minutes at a time." At another time he said "Oh, Royal, addressing his son, who was also a minister, "let not the love of the world prevent you from preaching the gospel."

Although in quite limited circumstances, he bequeathed \$100 to missions, and the

interest of \$100 for ten years to aid in supporting preaching near his residence.

The rapid growth of the Scioto conference, its geographical position, and the character of its ministry, soon gave to it the position of a leading conference; and, when the church's press was established in 1834, it was placed, in the intervals of the general conference, under the management of this conference. This supervisory authority was retained until 1853. Of the men, not already named, who were identified with this conference prior to 1840, and who have taken a leading part in her counsels and in the counsels of the church, a few more must be noticed.

Among the first of these stands the name of the lamented JAMES KINNEY, of whose life and labors only a meager sketch has been preserved. Mr. Kinney's parents emigrated from Ireland to Pennsylvania,—thence to Knox county, Ohio. Of six children he was the second. As his parents were very poor, and the country almost an unbroken wilderness, his education was entirely neglected. At sixteen years of age he was converted, and called to preach; and, although he could not read a text, he was not dis-

obedient to the heavenly calling. With such knowledge as he had, drawing largely upon his own experience, he lifted up his youthful voice in the wilderness; and not a few of the new settlers were brought to Jesus through his instrumentality.

He was not content, however, to remain in ignorance. He first learned to read, and then applied himself to the study of English Grammar, and to some of the best theological works. Aided by some well-informed friends, he made rapid advancement in his studies; meanwhile he ceased not to preach wherever opportunity offered. In his twenty-first year he was married, and, some time afterward, was received into the Scioto conference, and admitted into the itineracy. Here a wide field of usefulness was opened before him, and he seemed to be thoroughly furnished for the work. The church was at that time in transition from the German to the English; and the demand for well-qualified, zealous, and self-sacrificing English preachers was exceedingly pressing.

From the time he was received into the Scioto conference, until his death, a period of scarcely ten years, no man in the church labored with more success. He gave him-



self wholly to the ministry of the word. He went forth as a flaming herald of salvation. A portion of the time he filled the office of presiding elder, being elected in 1829. He was a member of the general conference in 1829. But, like many of God's chosen vessels, he was the child of affliction, and the time allotted for his earthly labors was short.

About two years previous to his death he suffered greatly, from a most painful abscess in his side, yet he did not cease to travel and to preach, patiently enduring his affliction. His last sermon was preached at a camp-meeting on Pleasant Run, four miles east of Lancaster, O. One who heard him on that occasion, says:—"When he ascended the pulpit, raised his withered hands in prayer, and turned his pale face toward the Majesty on high, it seemed as though his sainted spirit was stealing away from his bosom, and ascending with his trembling breath, to the mansions above!"

He arose before the assembled thousands, and announced his text,—“If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost,”—with the presentiment that he was preaching his last sermon, and he seemed to be especially strengthened for the occasion. His clear

voice penetrated every ear, and its melting tones brought tears from every eye. One who heard him on that occasion, after nearly thirty years had passed, remarked to the writer that the tones of his voice, as he quoted this scripture, "Oh that they were wise," etc., seemed fresh in his memory as if he had heard them but yesterday. He possessed much of Mr. Whitfield's power of emphasis. After concluding his sermon, which resulted in many conversions, he remarked, "My earthly labors are done." He was taken to the hospitable residence of D. Mechlin, near the camp-ground, where he lingered until the 15th of February, 1832, when he died in great peace, in the 32nd year of his age. It need scarcely be added that his victory in death was complete.

With the subdued gladness of a weary traveler who is preparing to set sail in a vessel homeward bound, one week before his death he made preparations for his funeral, selected a brother\* to preach it, the text he should use, and then designated the hour when his friends should call to witness his departure; and, at the appointed hour, tri-

\* Rev. J. Russel,

umphing in redeeming grace, he set sail for the heavenly port.

In hight, Mr. Kinney was six feet; frame spare, eyes deep blue and penetrating; complexion light. In conversation he was lively, and yet no one could be in his company long without feeling the influence of the deep-toned piety which he undoubtedly possessed. His memory was very retentive, and this enabled him, with all his disadvantages, to acquire a large fund of knowledge, in a few years. As a preacher he was systematic, strictly so; and he had the rare faculty of following up an argument, which convinced the judgment, with an appeal which seldom failed to melt the heart. His manner was mild and persuasive; yet none were more faithful in exposing sin. He never daubed with "untempered mortar."

He was remarkably punctual in fulfilling his appointments. One anecdote, illustrative of this trait in his character, is related of him.\* He had agreed to preach at the infirmary in Fairfield Co. When the day arrived, he was some ten miles distant, and the clouds were pouring down rain. He was entreated not to go; and when the argument that God did not

\* By J. Montgomery.



require such sacrifices was pressed, he only replied,—“God has called me to preach the Gospel to the poor, and I must go.”

He dearly loved the truth, and was a staunch defender of those peculiar principles which have subjected our church to the frowns of the world, and the opposition of compromising churches.

In 1833 WILLIAM HANBY was admitted into the Scioto conference. The prominent part which he has acted in the history of the church will make a sketch of his life interesting. Mr. Hanby was born in Washington Co., Pa., April 8th, 1808. Being an orphan, he felt, in early childhood, the pinching hand of want; when but a small boy he was bound out to a Quaker, where he received excellent moral and religious instruction. At sixteen he was apprenticed to a saddler. In 1828, without money, and alone, he left Pennsylvania, to seek his fortune in Ohio. It pleased God to lead him into a pious United Brethren family, at Rushville, O.; and it was not long until he sought and found the Lord. At a school-house in Perry Co., in 1830, invited by N. Havens, he went to the mourner's bench, under an overwhelming sense of his lost

estate, and before he left it, found peace in believing.

Soon after his conversion, and unexpectedly to him, a license to exhort was handed him by John Russel, then presiding elder in Scioto conference. In 1832 he was licensed to preach, and in 1833 was received, as already stated, into the Scioto conference. He was placed on Wolf creek circuit, then two hundred and seventy miles around, including twenty-eight appointments. The net increase of numbers on the circuit was one hundred. In 1834 he was elected presiding elder, his district embracing the whole conference composed of ten circuits. In the service of this district during this year, he traveled on horseback four thousand miles. He continued to serve the conference as presiding elder until 1837, when he was appointed by the general conference, of which he was a member, General Book Agent and Treasurer of the church's printing establishment at Circleville. In 1839 he was appointed editor, in place of W. R. Rhinehart, resigned. The general conference of 1841 continued him in the editorial chair.

In 1845 he was elected bishop. In 1849 he was again elected editor of the Telescope. In

March 1852, in order that he might devote himself wholly to the financial interests of the establishment, he resigned. Since 1853 he has sustained a somewhat retired relation to the cause, owing to the partial failure of his health. From 1834 to 1853, a period of twenty years, his influence in the church was decided and salutary. In the days of his health and vigor, he was a stirring and very effective preacher. As a financier, he probably saved the Telescope office from a disgraceful wreck; and as a bishop he did much to establish order, especially in the business affairs of the conferences.

He contributed very materially to the progress of Scioto conference, especially from 1834 to 1840.

DAVID EDWARDS was born five miles from Llanvullin, North Wales, May 5th, 1816. His parents emigrated to this country in 1821, and after a residence of two years near Baltimore, Md., settled in Delaware Co., O., where, in 1825, his father died. Soon after the decease of his father, David was placed in a woolen-factory, to learn the trade of carding and cloth-dressing. At seventeen he commenced tramping as a journeyman, and at eighteen was converted, near Lancaster, Fair-



field Co., O. Less than a year after his conversion he was licensed to preach. His first license is dated May 23rd, 1835. In November of the same year he commenced to fill vacancies on Pickaway circuit, and in the spring of 1836, as already stated, he was received into the Scioto conference. He was received into the traveling connection, and with John Eckert\* for a colleague, was placed on Brush creek circuit,—a circuit which embraced a large part of the counties of Ross, Pike, Adams, Brown, and Highland, and was three hundred and sixty miles around. Twenty-eight regular appointments were filled on each round. During the third and fourth years of his itinerant labors, his work lay in the hilly regions of south-eastern Ohio, where he was not unfrequently in danger of being mobbed for his bold utterance of the truth.

About the time Mr. Edwards entered the ministry, the *Religious Telescope* was started at Circleville, to which he became an occasional contributor. His contributions were always in good taste, and evinced a well-informed and discriminating mind. In 1845 he

\* John Eckert was a zealous German. He made two visits to Germany to preach, where he had some success, and was imprisoned for conscience sake. He was a good man—a little singular.

was elected editor of the *Telescope*. Though not fond of writing, and greatly preferring the pulpit to the pen, he gave to the paper a character which it had never before attained. His editorials were carefully prepared, pointed and instructive. In 1849 he was elected bishop, and at each succeeding general conference since, has been re-elected. Although he has suffered much from bodily pain, the marks of which are expressed upon his countenance, yet as a bishop he appears to act upon the motto, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." His influence as a circuit preacher, presiding elder, editor, and especially as bishop, has been good, always good. A rigid disciplinarian, a thorough and systematic preacher, an untiring laborer, and a close student, his influence upon the church in the west has been almost incalculable. Bishop Edwards is about five feet ten, is a little awkwardly built, has a remarkably penetrating eye, deeply set underneath a high overarching forehead. His mouth, and, especially the set of his teeth, seem to say, "You can neither coax nor drive me from what I believe to be right." Although he possesses a kind nature, yet his stern adherence to his convictions makes him sometimes appear

to be unnecessarily rigid. The men on whom God places the great responsibility of guarding the outposts of the church, will always appear to the enemies of the truth to be altogether too tenacious. They would greatly prefer to see those posts manned by less conscientious and more yielding natures.

The accession of Mr. Edwards to the itineracy of the Scioto conference, contributed no little to its prosperity.

L. DAVIS was received in 1839. He was born in Botetourt Co., Va., in 1814, and in the eighteenth year of his age was converted. For some time after his conversion he united with no church; but, at length, forming an acquaintance with the United Brethren in Christ, he cast in his lot with them, was recommended to the Scioto conference, and licensed to preach. Being a man of studious habits and of superior mind, and uniting great firmness with sincere piety, he soon began to wield a decided influence in the conference and in the church. He was one of the earliest, as he has been one of the most persevering, friends of colleges under the patronage and control of the church; and he was chosen President of the church's first college. In 1853, quite unexpectedly to him-



self, he was elected bishop, and in 1857 he was re-elected. Dignified, calm, clear-headed, and impartial, Mr. Davis has always rendered thorough satisfaction as a presiding officer. In June 1860, he was again called to the presidency of Otterbein University.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

OUTGROWTHS OF THE MIAMI CONFERENCE—  
INDIANA, WABASH, ETC.—WHITCOM, FARM-  
ER, MAHAN—THE WORK IN ILLINOIS—J.  
DAVIS, W. DAVIS, MORGAN, GRIFFITH, KENO-  
YER AND HOOBLER.

We have already seen that in 1825 the old Miami conference was divided, the east part taking the name of Scioto. Four years after, in 1829, another conference was formed out of the west part of the territory of the Miami, and called Indiana conference. And it may be well enough to state here, that in 1853 another flourishing conference, the Auglaize, was set off from the North part of the vigorous old mother conference of the West, while, at the same time, a large contribution of ministers and members was made by her to the German conference.

In May, 1829, the preachers in Indiana met for the last time in the old conference.

We give the allotments of labor for that portion of the work which constituted the new conference:

*White Water:* John McNamar, presiding elder. D. Bonebrake and N. Ross, circuit preachers.

*Charlestown:* Geo. Brown, presiding elder. Benjamin Abbott, circuit preacher.

*Orange:* Francis Whitcom, presiding elder. A. Farmer and A. Stacy, circuit preachers.

*Flat Rock:* John Morgan, presiding elder. D. Thomas, circuit preacher.

*The Wabash:* John Denham.

Thus the Indiana conference, at its organization, had five circuits, a number of first-class itinerant preachers, and a territory, of large extent, rapidly filling up by emigration from the older states.

The good work, between 1829 and 1833, was extended in all directions, especially toward the northern and western portions of the State. The missionaries of the conference found their way, during those years, into the St. Joseph country, in the northwest, and across the Wabash into Illinois in the West; where they formed societies, out of which have since grown conference districts.



Among the efficient laborers in this conference, during its infancy, FRANCIS WHITCOM deserves a prominent place. He was an able preacher, and an indefatigable laborer. He toiled on in the cause he loved so well until 1846, when he left his field of labor for the sick-room, where, on the 16th of December, he died. His language during his illness, and at the hour of his departure was, "*all is well.*" His body sleeps in a quiet rural graveyard, near Elkhart, Ind. He yet speaks through many who were brought to Christ through his labors.

But no one of the pioneers in Indiana, and in the Indiana conferences, rendered more distinguished service to the cause of Christ, between 1825 and 1839, than AARON FARMER.

Born among the poor, and in a new country, his early advantages were few. Soon after his conversion, with quite a limited education, he entered the ministry, and, as early as 1824, was employed as an itinerant. His first circuit, Orange, embraced portions of five sparsely-settled counties. The people lived in log cabins; and dim paths, across unbridged streams, and through deep forests, led from appointment to ap-

pointment. When Mr. Farmer commenced his labors on Orange circuit he was about twenty-five years of age.

He was retained on that circuit three consecutive years, with constantly-increasing popularity and usefulness; and, by the time he had closed his labors there, he had obtained such distinction as a preacher that he was sought for beyond the limits of any circuit or mission the conference might assign him. Having the heart of a pioneer missionary, he could not neglect the calls from the scattered sheep, although the labor which an acceptance of those calls involved was immense. "I have known him," says an intimate friend,\* "to ride forty miles, and preach three sermons in a day; and although unbridged streams of high water might cross his path, he never hesitated to swim them, no matter how great the danger or the exposure incurred."

During the first three years of his ministry, among the young men awakened and converted through his instrumentality, were a number who have since become eminently useful preachers. He seldom preached to a tearless congregation; and few men have

\* William Davis.

been more successful in winning souls. Wherever he went, for a period of sixteen years, the people flocked in crowds to hear him; and he had the happiness of seeing added unto the church, almost daily, such as are saved.

At one period of his short career he took a long preaching tour, during which he visited portions of Illinois, Missouri, and Tennessee.

The support which he received was extremely meager, yet he endured hardness as a good soldier. A few days before his demise, and while lying upon a sick-bed, conversing with a brother\* about the hardships to which the pioneer ministers were necessarily subjected, he said—"Although I have faced the fierce winds, and often almost perished with cold; and although I have been sent many miles from home, and have received very little support, yet, should I never meet my brethren in conference again, they will bear me witness that I never complained."

It has already been remarked that his early advantages were poor, and that he entered the ministry with a very limited store of knowledge. This is true, yet few

\* John Morgan.



men, during the incessant toils of a pioneer itinerant life, have cultivated their talents with more assiduity. He was an earnest student. He stored his mind with knowledge, and became a workman that needed not to be ashamed in any pulpit. His talents for writing were cultivated, and in 1830, four years before the first copy of the *Religious Telescope* was issued, he commenced the publication, on his own pecuniary responsibility, of a monthly periodical, called "*Zion's Advocate*." This paper, issued at Salem, Ind., was not well sustained, and, as a matter of course, its publication was necessarily suspended after a fair trial had been made.

When Mr. Farmer died he was presiding elder of the Indianapolis district. On the 29th of January, 1838, he wrote:—"For the last three or four months there has been a gradual increase of the spirit of hungering and thirsting after righteousness in the church—a deep loathing of self before God, and yet longing to know and enjoy all the fullness of the Gospel dispensation. Our prayer-meetings are better attended, and a spirit of intercession prevails in the congregations generally. There is an enlarged

state of mind. Many seem pierced with conscious guilt; and we are looking to the Great Head of the church for the set time to favor Zion."

A letter written about six months previous to his death must be copied, as it gives us a clear insight into his character and labors, and contains a very tender allusion to the partner of his toils.

"We commenced our fourth quarterly meeting on Indianapolis circuit the last Saturday in July. After communion on Sabbath evening, God was with us in divine power—saints rejoiced and sinners wept. \* \* \* At a two-day's meeting in the wilds of Indiana, on Cicero Creek, near the Miami Indian Reserve, God was with us of a truth. At the close there were but few who did not come forward and give their hands, desiring to be prayed for. We had to leave them in deep lamentation. O God, carry on thy work in their hearts! On Tuesday, in company with Bro. Davis, I preached in Andersontown, Ind., to a large and mixed assembly—infidels, of ancient and modern type, and some true believers and friends of God and man. On Friday our first camp-meeting commenced near Middle-

town, Ind. \* \* Every sermon and prayer seemed seasoned. There were no visible awakenings until the afternoon of the second day, when the cries of sinners were heard. On Monday a number were converted. Other appointments compelled me to close with great reluctance, leaving, perhaps, fifty trembling mourners. I pursued my way to the second camp-meeting, preaching twice a day. Reached the camp ground, near Indianapolis, on Friday, 10th. I delivered two discourses on Saturday and Sunday, from Romans 12th. The milk-and-water professors began to be provoked to good works. \* The meeting gradually grew better. \* \* I introduced the love-feast before sacrament Sunday night. It was commenced with God in our midst. There appeared to be a general struggle for full redemption in the blood of the Lamb. The love-feast continued until near midnight. We met on Monday to take our leave of each other—a time not soon forgotten. After a farewell sermon by Bro. Ball, we met at the table of our Father. There I met my dear Gitty, who had rode forty miles to meet me at the Lord's table, where He was manifest unto us 'in the breaking of bread.' We



could say, surely God is here and we know it. After my wife Gitty had recovered her strength (for she had lain helpless under the power of God for some minutes), we took the parting hand, in anticipation of meeting where there will be no more parting." Thus, near the grave, toiled this unwearied itinerant.

On the 1st day of March, 1839, he died in great peace. Just before he died, while his neighbors were conversing around his bed, he asked them to be quiet. "Gitty," said he, for this was the familiar name by which he called his dear wife, "Gitty, come here, and listen." "To what shall I listen," she replied. "Why," said he, in surprise, "don't you hear that singing?" "No," said she, "I do not." "O," he continued, listening again, "it is the sweetest music I have ever heard in my life. The heavenly messengers are come for me, and I must go." With this he asked them to raise him up and give him some water. He took the cup, drank, and then, with a smile, closed his eyes in death. He died when about forty years of age.

In person Mr. Farmer was quite prepossessing. Hight five feet ten, firmly built,

face round and full, forehead broad and high, chest full. His personal piety was deep. No one ever questioned that. He had a passion for souls which no labors, sorrows, or hardships could abate. He went forth weeping, and in the harvest few men will have more sheaves.

In 1828 JACOB MAHAN was sent out as a missionary into the Wabash country, by the Miami conference. Some United Brethren had moved into that country from Ohio, and from Corydon, Ind.; and a missionary being desired, Mr. Mahan, although considerably advanced in years, volunteered to go. His labors were greatly blessed; but in the fall of the year he was taken ill, and died—died as the faithful missionary dies. Mr. Mahan entered the itinerant ranks as early as 1824, and was a man of excellent preaching abilities, and of pure life.

John Morgan says of him: "He came to us a minister from the Regular Baptist church, when considerably advanced in years. He was a large man and quite corpulent. His manners were gentlemanly, and he was grave in his deportment. He possessed excellent conversational powers, and his sermons were clear, forcible, and strong. He

labored on our circuit about two years, and was then sent to the Wabash. When on his way he stopped at my house, and, during the conversation, remarked that he never expected to return. But nothing daunted, he went on. I have learned that his labors were much blessed."

The following year the Miami conference, as we have seen from the minutes, sent out JOHN DENHAM to fill the place vacated by the early death of Mr. Mahan. Under the labors of Mr. Denham many societies were formed; and the way was opened for other laborers, while Mr. D. pushed on still farther westward.

A few families of United Brethren having moved from the Scioto conference and settled on the Little Mackinaw river, McLean county, Illinois, Mr. J. Denham, in some irregular missionary excursions in 1831, visited, and preached for them. Under those labors a few societies were organized. In the fall of 1832 the Indiana conference recognized the work under the name of the *Mackinaw mission*, and supplied it with J. P. ECKELS, a young man who had just entered the ministry. Under the labors of this young man, precious seasons of grace were enjoyed,



and many souls were awakened, converted, and added to the church. He was succeeded by J. SPRADLEY, through whose instrumentality the good work continued to prosper. About this time Mr. Denham removed from Warren Co., Ind., to McLean Co., Ill.; and several other ministers from the Wabash visited him, and assisted in holding meetings.

So rapidly did the work expand that in 1833 a new conference was set off from the Indiana, and called the WABASH CONFERENCE. The first regular meeting of the Wabash conference was held in Park county, Ind., in September, 1835. The new conference was composed of thirteen preachers. The fields of labor were named and supplied as follows:

WABASH DISTRICT—William Davis, P. E.  
*St. Joseph circuit*, James Griffith.

*Pine* " William Davis.

*Wea* " E. T. Cook.

*Cole Creek* " James Davis.

*Vermilion* " Josiah Davis.

ILLINOIS DISTRICT—John Denham, P. E.

*Mackinaw circuit*, J. T. Timmons.

Here are eight fields of labor and eight itinerant preachers in the Wabash conference in 1835, twenty-six years ago. In another chapter we give a somewhat detailed

account of the expansion of the work northward, and of the formation of the St. Joseph conference as an outgrowth from the Wabash; and from the chapter on the Iowa conference, it will be seen that the work in that conference was commenced by the Wabash missionaries.

In 1835 but one circuit was recognized in Illinois; but the appointment of Mr. Denham as presiding elder of a district, with a single circuit, or rather mission, as a basis, implied that there was a large territory and a probability of growth. Soon after, the labors of John Hoobler and Josiah Davis were directed to Illinois; and in 1845 the Illinois conference was set off from the Wabash. The same year the White River was set off from the Indiana. Let us recapitulate. In 1829 the Miami conference embraced the whole work west of the Scioto conference. In 1830 the Indiana was formed; in 1835 the Wabash; and in 1845, after ten years of remarkable missionary activity, the St. Joseph, Illinois, White River, and Iowa, were added to the list. Thus the old Miami, in 1845, was able to look upon a family of six as flourishing daughters as ever received a mother's blessing.

Of a few of the ministers in the Wabash

who were most actively engaged in this great movement, notice may be taken. No name has a sweeter odor among the brethren of the north-west, than that of JAMES DAVIS, a meager sketch only of whose life and labors has been preserved.

Mr. Davis was converted about the year 1830, and became a member of the first United Brethren society organized west of Wabash river, at the house of his father, in the vicinity of Milford, Warren Co., Ind. After his conversion he was distinguished for more than ordinary zeal and talent; and for the great power which attended his exhortations, all of which were commended to the people by the humility, sobriety, and deep-toned piety which graced his conversation and deportment. He was received into the Indiana conference at the Haw Patch, in Bartholomew Co., Indiana, in September 1833. The four subsequent years he traveled circuits in the Wabash valley, between Terre Haute and Logansport, where his labors were attended with great outpourings of the Spirit of grace and the power of salvation, as witnesses of which many precious souls now live both in heaven and on earth. In 1837 he moved to St. Joseph Co., Ind., and labored



as presiding elder for one year, with great profit. In 1838, he returned to the Wabash, soon after which he removed to Wisconsin, and extended his labors over the Rock River country, and did much of the work from which the Rock River conference was formed.

Mr. Davis was a medium-sized man, with dark hair, heavy eyebrows, and a large, keen, hazel-colored eye. His literary attainments were limited, but his habits were studious. He was a close and correct observer of men and things; but it was the power of grace more than all else, which gave his ministry its distinguished momentum.

Worn out and broken in health, he went over the river to the better land a few years since. In the great harvest he "shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

At the first session of the Indiana conference, which met in Harrison Co., Indiana, thirty-one years ago, WILLIAM DAVIS was received. He was born in Ontario Co., N. Y. January 3rd, 1812. His parents, who were members of the Free Will Baptist church, settled in Washington Co., Indiana, in 1818. In their new western home they maintained a deep religious interest in the family; and

"often at family worship," writes Mr. Davis, "I promised God that I would serve him. In August, 1828, my concern for salvation became deeper than ever before; and on the 25th of September, at a prayer-meeting where opportunity was given for persons to speak, I arose and told the people that I wanted religion. Three days afterward, when it seemed that despair, with all its horrors, was gathering around me, I resolved that if I perished I would perish praying. With this determination I retired to the woods to pray; and as I prayed, my darkness was turned to light, and my sorrow to joy.

'The Spirit answered to the blood,  
And told me I was born of God.' "

Immediately after his conversion he began to exhort; and one week after he had passed his seventeenth year, at the residence of James Griffith, in Washington Co., Ind., he preached his first sermon. He was placed on a circuit, which he traveled afoot, not having means to purchase a horse. Unable to endure the hard travel, he hired out at \$8 per month, until, with his earnings, he was able to purchase a horse, saddle, and bridle. On the 26th of May, 1830, thus equipped, he went to the Indiana annual conference, was

received, and placed on Tanner's creek circuit. He now gave himself wholly to the ministry of the word. The defects of his early education were repaired by diligent study on horseback and beside the cabin fires of the new settlers.

If we were an artist we would pause here to give the reader a picture of a pioneer preacher's studio. We would show to him the interior of a log cabin, in one end of which we would place the beds; in a corner, near the fire, the rude cupboard and table, the latter made of a broad puncheon, clean and white; around the great log fire, we would introduce to him six or seven children, the youngest in the lap of its mother. In the midst of this interesting group we would place the young preacher. The hard travel of the day is past. His horse has been placed under a shed; his overcoat and leggins are drying before the fire; the wind howls around the cabin; and the snow beats against the window-panes, while he is sitting, Bible in hand, preparing a sermon. In such a studio, sermons have been prepared which would not discredit our best city pulpits.

When the Wabash conference was organized, Mr. Davis was elected its first presiding



elder. This important charge was placed upon him when he was but twenty-two years old. But he had the prudence, the foresight, and firmness of age.

In the spring of 1846, in a letter to a friend, Mr. Davis wrote: Dear Bro.:—"A few evenings ago, while sitting by my fire-side, looking forward to the labor and exposure, and privation which I must endure during the conference year which has just commenced, my mind was carried back to the past; whereupon I hunted up my old diary, by the aid of which I reached the following facts and conclusions: That I have been an itinerant minister in the church of the United Brethren in Christ sixteen years; that I have traveled for ministerial purposes fifty-four thousand two hundred miles; that I have preached (or tried to preach) five thousand one hundred and ten sermons; that I have received as an earthly remuneration \$652 00; *that the Lord has hitherto helped me; and that it would be wickedness to distrust so good a friend in time to come.*

"My time has been spent chiefly on the frontiers, among poor people; and, could I lead some of my rich brethren along the Indian trails, or more dimly-beaten paths, to

the cabins in the woods, and introduce them to meanly-clad parents, surrounded by almost naked children, and let them worship and mingle their prayers, songs, and tears around the same altar, they too would love those poor brethren, excuse their scanty contributions, and of their abundance give something for the support of the missionary, who, perhaps, with ragged clothes and naked knees (for I have preached with naked knees) is preaching on the frontiers. I do love the poor pioneer brethren in their cabins, and sympathize with the missionary who breaks to them, at great personal sacrifices, the bread of life; and if after death my spirit should be permitted to visit my brethren on earth, I would fly on speedy wing to the suffering missionary, and whisper consolation in his ear."

In person Mr. D. is about five feet ten. His eyes, nose and mouth are large, and he has a broad, high forehead. No one, perhaps, has ever heard a hasty or ill-advised remark from his lips. He speaks slowly and distinctly, and often eloquently.

JOHN MORGAN, who has been identified with the rise and progress of the church in Indiana, was born in Yates Co., New York,

April 26th, 1801. In 1817 he emigrated with his parents to Dearborn Co., Indiana. In 1821 he united with the United Brethren church as a seeker of religion, soon after which he obtained peace in believing. In 1822 he was licensed to preach by the Miami conference. His early advantages were exceedingly poor, yet by application to study he became an excellent preacher and a wise counsellor. He served a number of years as a presiding elder, and is highly esteemed as one of the fathers of the United Brethren ministry in Indiana.

But no one, perhaps, has contributed more to the growth of the church in Indiana, and especially in the Wabash conferences, than JAMES GRIFFITH. Prior to his conversion he was a proud skeptic. More than thirty years since he was converted; and soon after his conversion he began to preach the religion he had labored to destroy. He entered the itinerant ranks when the United Brethren church in Indiana was a mere handful; and, with unswerving fidelity and devotion, he has given to the cause his youth, and his vigorous manhood; and, as the shadows of evening begin to lengthen, his zeal wanes not. Mr. Griffith was a member of the Wabash



conference at its organization. He has served many years as a presiding elder, and been a member of the general conferences of 1833, 1849, 1853, and 1857. As an early and consistent advocate of the inalienable rights of man, without respect to clime or color, he suffered, especially during the earlier years of his ministry, no small share of obloquy and persecution; but he has lived to see a very encouraging improvement in the tone of public sentiment on that subject, not only in his own state, but in more than half of the states of the Union.

In manners Mr. Griffith is retiring and diffident; but he has a sound judgment and an unconquerable will.

FREDERICK KENOYER and JOHN HOOBLER were both pioneer evangelists in Indiana, and Illinois, and deserve mention in connection with Griffith, James and William Davis, and others that we can not name. Both these ministers have given to the church upwards of thirty years of earnest work; and their names should be cherished by those who have entered into their labors. They are now in the evening time of life, and God will presently say to each

"Servant of God, well done,  
Rest from thy loved employ ;  
The battle's fought, the victory's won,  
Enter thy Master's joy."

But we can not pursue these personal sketches further, however pleasing the task might be, and however worthy of notice many others are who have not been so much as named in these pages.

## CHAPTER XV.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1833—THE PUBLISHING INTERESTS.

The sixth general conference convened at Dresback's church, Pickaway county, Ohio, May 14th, 1833. Bishop Kumler presided, his venerable colleague, Newcomer, having gone to his reward three years previously. There were present thirty-three delegates, representing six conference districts, six of whom were from Pennsylvania, six from Indiana, one from Virginia, and twenty from Ohio. Their names follow:

*Pennsylvania conference:* Ezekial Boring, Jacob Erb, Jacob Snyder, William Brown, James Neiman, and Frederick Gilbert.

*Muskingum conference:* Henry G. Spayth, Adam Hetzler, Sewel C. Briggs, John Eckhart, and Christian Kenagi.

*Virginia conference:* Wm. Rhinehart.

*Scioto conference:* John Russel, Jacob Baulus, George Benedum, Daniel Davis, William



Hastings, James Ross, Samuel Hiestand, and John Coons.

*Indiana conference:* John Denham, James Griffith, Aaron Farmer, Josiah Davis, John McNamar, and Francis Whitcom.

*Miami conference:* Henry Kumler, jr., J. Fetherhuff, Samuel Hoffman, J. Swearingen, Abraham S. Decker, David Keiser, and Geo. Bonebrake.

We will notice, in their order, such of the proceedings of this conference as are of permanent interest.

1. *Definition of the powers of the general conference.* The question was raised, "Does the general conference possess any power which an annual conference does not?" To this the following answer was given: "Yes: it is alone in the power of the general conference to elect, from among the elders, one or more bishops; and to make such provisions as may be conducive to the good of the whole church: Provided, however, that none of her acts shall be so construed as to alter the confession of faith, or in any manner change the meaning, spirit, rules, and regulations of our discipline as they now stand."

2. *How the general conference should be com-*

*posed.* It was decided that the general conference should be composed of two elders from each annual conference district, who were to be elected as follows: Each annual conference was required to nominate four elders as candidates; and the two who should receive the highest number of votes from all the members of the church at a popular election, were to be declared delegates. The number of delegates to be elected by each conference has been raised to three, and the power of the annual conference to *nominate* has been abolished.

3. *Provision for increasing the salary of an itinerant preacher.* The rule providing for the appointment of circuit stewards was stricken out, and the following clause was added: "In the case of a traveling preacher having a family of children, the annual conference of which he is a member shall take the matter into consideration, and add over and above his salary whatever amount said conference may deem proper." This power of adding to the stated salary, in cases demanding it, was, at a subsequent general conference, transferred from the annual to the quarterly conferences.

4. *Swearing and affirming.* The rule adopt-

ed in relation to swearing and affirming is quoted on page 181, of this volume.

5. *Class-meetings.* Considerable attention was given to these meetings. It was made the duty of class-leaders to appoint prayer and class-meetings; and it was recommended that all the members of the church attend class-meeting once every two weeks, and oftener if practicable.

6. *Length of time an itinerant may remain on a circuit.* It was decided that an itinerant preacher should not be allowed to travel more than three consecutive years on the same circuit, *except by consent of the conference.* The same limitation was applied to preachers on stations.

7. *A printing establishment projected.* AARON FARMER was one of the first in our church to see the importance of the religious press, as an auxiliary to the pulpit; and, as early as 1829, he made an earnest, although not very successful, effort to employ this mighty evangelizing agency under the patronage of the Miami conference. At the session of that conference, in 1829, the following resolutions were adopted:

"Resolved by the Miami conference to



approve the publication of '*Zion's Advocate*,' with the following restrictions:

"1. It is to contain doctrine consonant with the church of the United Brethren in Christ.

"2. It is not to be devoted to unprofitable controversy.

"3. It is to be printed on good paper, and neatly executed.

"4. It is to be edited by Aaron Farmer."

*Zion's Advocate* was accordingly issued from Salem, Ind., by Mr. Farmer as editor and publisher; and, although it was a fair paper, it died young, not because its conductor failed to comply with the conditions specified by the conference, but for want of a sufficient patronage. The enterprise, however, was a proper one, and the attempt to inaugurate it served to awaken the attention of the church to the subject. Accordingly, the quadrennial conference succeeding the failure of *Zion's Advocate* resolved to establish a religious paper, to be controlled by a board of trustees appointed by the general conference. In pursuance of this resolution, John Russel, and Jonathan and George Dresback, were appointed trustees; and they were authorized to circulate sub-

scriptions in all the conferences, one for donations, the other for subscriptions, to the proposed paper; also, to publish, or cause to be published, at Circleville, O., "a paper devoted to religious, moral, and literary intelligence."

8. *A new conference.* A new conference was formed in north-western Ohio, and called the Sandusky conference; and it is the opinion of Mr. Spayth, who was a member of the general conference of 1833, and one of the secretaries, that the Wabash conference was set off from the Indiana conference, at the same time. Mr. Hanby, as already stated, entertains a different opinion. The minutes of the general conference contain nothing on the subject; and the question is one of small importance. It is a fact that the Sandusky conference was organized in 1834, and the Wabash in 1835, raising the whole number of annual conference districts to eight.

Soon after the general conference adjourned, the brethren to whom the PUBLISHING INTERESTS had been entrusted, commenced their work. Calls were made for donations and subscriptions, and on the 12th of April, 1834, they bought at public sale, in Circleville, O.,

a printing press, type, and fixtures, for which they paid \$450 00. In May following they bought a lot and two houses, for which they paid \$550 00 more. A few months before this time, W. R. Rhinehart had commenced the publication of a religious paper called the Mountain Messenger, at Hagerstown, Md. As the trustees were anxious to unite the whole church in the support of one paper, they bought out the Messenger, paying \$325 00 for its type, and employed Mr. Rhinehart to edit the contemplated church organ; and on the 16th of December, 1834, the first number of the "*Religious Telescope*," a middling-sized folio semi-monthly, made its appearance.

Thus with a debt of \$1,600 00, and a subscription list, much of which was worthless, of 1197, the United Brethren Printing Establishment, commenced its career. The paper issued was a very respectable sheet, well edited, yet not popular, because of the extreme views which it advocated. It entered largely into the controversies of the times, and earnestly and boldly, though not always prudently, marched in the front ranks of every reform. The second year the subscription was reduced to 856, and when the paper was in its seventh year, its subscription only



reached 1450, and on the credit system at that.

The concern, however, found no difficulty in adding to its liabilities; and by this time they had reached \$6,000! Had it been an individual enterprise, or had the trustees been men of feeble hearts or of poor credit, it would have failed utterly. In 1839, William Hanby succeeded Mr. Rhinehart as editor and publisher. Being a better financier, less inclined to extremes, and receiving a more liberal patronage from the church, the establishment soon began to show signs of life. In the spring of 1843 the number of subscribers was swelled to nearly 2,000, still on the credit system, however, and the proceeds, above contingent expenses, were reckoned at \$600 00. At the general conference of 1845 it appeared that the paper had rising 3,000 subscribers, and that it was yielding a net profit of about \$1,200 00 annually. The profits, however, of a paper conducted as this was, on the credit system, can not be calculated with accuracy. At the general conference of 1845 the cash system was adopted. David Edwards was elected editor. Four years of prosperity followed. The paper was well edited, and its finances judi-

ciously managed; and in 1849, after a struggle of fourteen years, the debts of the concern were all canceled, and it was placed in a position to begin to acquire the means of usefulness.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE MUSKINGUM CONFERENCE—FORNEY, KENAGI, BRIGGS, S. LONG, A. BIDDLE—COMMENCEMENT OF THE WORK ON THE RESERVE.

THE organization of this conference in 1818, and its progress up to 1821, have been noticed. In 1822 three ministers proposed to travel,—Johnston, J. Long, and J. Klein; and Abraham Forney was appointed presiding elder. The minutes of 1823 and 1824 are not in our possession. In 1825 the conference met in Westmoreland Co., Pa., Seventeen preachers were reported, among whom were Draksel, Jacob Winter, A. Forney, H. G. Spayth, H. Erret, H. Purdy, C. Berger, Kenagi, John Crum, S. C. Briggs, and Peter Weimer. Mr. Spayth and Mr. Johnston were appointed presiding elders of the two districts, and John Klein was appointed to travel the Westmoreland circuit. No itinerant was employed that year in the territory now embraced in the Muskingum



conference. The work was sustained wholly by the local ministry.

During the years 1825 and 1826 the conference suffered a great loss by the decease of Draksel, Forney, Peter Weimer, John Slutts, and John Klein,—nearly one-third of the entire ministry reported at the Westmoreland conference. Of the venerable Draksel's character, labors, and decease, notice has been taken in a preceding chapter of this work.

ABRAHAM FORNEY was one of the pioneers in north-eastern Ohio. He penetrated into the new country at an early day, and was intimately associated with the rise of the Muskingum conference, and its progress up to the period of his decease. He was a member of the third general conference. John Klein was a remarkably zealous and pious young man—the only itinerant employed in 1825. He died at his post. Mr. Weimer and Mr. Slutts were devoted German preachers. While noticing the decease of these pioneers in the Muskingum conference, we will state that CHRISTIAN KENAGI was one of the most faithful and beloved of those early ministers. He was among the first who embraced religion, and became

identified with the United Brethren in Christ, west of the Alleghany mountains. He belongs, indeed, to the German pioneer fathers. He commenced to preach about the year 1802, while residing in Westmoreland county, Pa.; and as early as 1817, or 1818, he removed to Tuscarawas county, O. "For piety, brotherly love, and humility," writes Mr. J. Weimer, "few were his equals. For a period of twenty years he could walk only by the aid of a staff in each hand; yet he was almost continually traveling in a small wagon, through the Muskingum district, visiting his German brethren, and preaching Jesus wherever opportunity offered. During each year of the last seven or eight of his life, he made a trip to the Sandusky district; and while on his last tour, he died shouting the praises of king Immanuel." At his death, on the 4th of March, 1841, he was in his seventieth year.

In 1826 the conference convened in Harrison county, O. Only eleven ministers were in attendance, two of whom were received during the session. John Crum and Henry Erret were appointed presiding elders, and James Haskins and Sewill C. Briggs gave themselves up to travel. Mr. Haskins was

stationed on Westmoreland circuit, Pa., and Mr. Briggs on Wills creek, Ohio.

S. C. BRIGGS was a man of superior talent, great zeal, and remarkable faith; and he contributed materially to the progress of religion in the Muskingum conference. Mr. Biddle relates the following, as an illustration of his "faith:" "At a camp-meeting in Harrison county, Ohio, it became his turn to preach at 3 o'clock P. M. Up to this time nothing of a remarkable character had occurred. When through with his sermon he descended from the stand, and, although the hour was unusual, he invited sinners to come forward and seek salvation. The whole congregation was moved. The work commenced, and continued all night. By sunrise next morning one hundred souls were converted."

Mr. Briggs was a member of the general conference of 1833. His end was peace.

In 1827 no material progress was made. In 1828 three circuits were supplied, viz.: Westmoreland, Wills Creek, and a new circuit called Wooster and New Lisbon. Four preachers were employed on these circuits; and at the end of the year their financial report ran thus:—Jacob Winters received



on Westmoreland circuit, \$84 33; H. Purdy on Wills Creek, \$32 88; Moses Herbert and A. Hetzler on Wooster and New Lisbon,—the former \$31 70, the latter \$35 62½; John Crum as presiding elder, \$14 86. All were well satisfied, for the year had been a good one. In 1829 the conference was divided into five circuits, and supplied as follows:

*Westmoreland*: J. Winter, circuit preacher. D. Worman, presiding elder.

*Wooster*: J. Crum, circuit preacher. J. Hildt, presiding elder.

*Wills Creek*: M. Herbert, circuit preacher. J. Crum, presiding elder.

*New Lisbon*: J. Harrison, circuit preacher. J. Stambach, presiding elder.

*Sandusky*: J. Zahn, circuit preacher. J. Baulus, presiding elder.

The whole sum paid to these itinerants for the year's work was \$266 22. In 1830, thirty-two ministers were recognized as members of the conference.

Among those who entered the itinerant ranks this year was SAMUEL LONG; a man of great prudence, deep piety, and respectable preaching abilities. Mr. Long has spent more than thirty years in the ministry; much of the time as an itinerant, first in

## HISTORY OF THE

the Washington and afterward in the Sandusky conference. In the last-named conference he now enjoys, in a superannuated relation, the confidence and affection of all who know him.

Between 1830 and 1833, the progress of the conference continued to be slow, owing to the want of a thorough itineracy, and the means for its support. The conference, during these years, seemed to vacillate between a partial and a thorough itinerant system. Up to 1833 its territory extended from Westmoreland county, Pa., to Wayne county, O.—a part of the time even to Sandusky county, O.; and the annual conferences were held alternately in Pennsylvania and Ohio. The general conference of 1833 attached that portion of the conference which lay in Pennsylvania to the Pennsylvania conference, and formed a new conference in the north-west, called the Sandusky conference. This change in boundaries, cut off many of the best churches and ministers; yet it contributed greatly to the prosperity of the conference. Confined within its natural boundaries, thrown upon its own resources, and having one of the best missionary fields in the world to cultivate, the Lord raised up from among

the young men of the church a class of ministers, who devoted themselves to itinerant labors, from year to year, with such zeal and success as told most favorably upon the prosperity of religion in that quarter of the State.

Among the efficient laborers called into the field about this time, no one contributed more to the growth of the conference than ALEXANDER BIDDLE. Born and raised amid the romantic hills of western Pennsylvania, Mr. Biddle grew to the age of sixteen years with few advantages, save a vigorous body and good brain. In 1826 Henry Purdy formed a class in his father's neighborhood, to which his father became attached; and in 1829, after seeking the Lord in great agony of spirit for some time, he was happily converted, on the banks of the Ohio, while witnessing the baptism of his mother! "What a halo of golden beauty," to use his own peculiar language, "lived all around me at that time." In a recent letter, Mr. B. writes: "Thirty-one years have passed away, and now, while writing, my soul burns within at these recollections." Soon after his conversion, which occurred in his nineteenth year, he began to exhort; and in 1831 he



was received into the Muskingum conference and placed on Wills Creek circuit. In 1832 he traveled Lisbon circuit. During this year he formed four new classes in Trumbull county, which were the beginning of the United Brethren work on the WESTERN RESERVE. Since 1832 this work has spread over the whole Reserve, and into Pennsylvania and New York. JOHN NEISZ was among the seventy-four converts received into the church on Libson circuit, by Mr. Biddle, in 1832.

In 1833 Mr. Biddle was elected presiding elder,—an office which he has filled nearly every year since, first in the Muskingum, and afterward in the Sandusky conference. He has been very successful in introducing young men into the ministry, and in inciting them to study. Mr. Biddle is still performing full work as an itinerant in the Sandusky conference. He has been a delegate to nearly all the quadrennial conferences of the church since 1841.

In 1838 a home missionary society was organized, for the purpose of extending the work more rapidly within the bounds of the conference; and two new fields of labor were formed on the Reserve.

Since 1838 the Lord of the harvest has sent forth into the Muskingum conference a class of itinerant laborers not excelled any where in the United Brethren church. In 1838, F. HILDT, recently called to his reward, and S. C. STEWARD, still at the work in the Wabash, were received into the conference. In 1839 C. CARTER and J. TODD, both of whom, after twenty years of service, continue to labor in the itineracy with marked efficiency, were received. Then came the devoted A. S. WADE, of precious memory. In 1842 E. SLUTTS and L. B. PERKINS were admitted, and in '43 and '44, W. S. TITUS, now of Michigan, Z. A. COLESTOCK, now of Pennsylvania, and J. GOODIN, and S. WEAVER, President of Western College, Iowa. After these, and along with them, came many other brethren, beloved in the Lord, under whose labors the work has been extended northward to the Lake, and eastward into the heart of western New York.

In 1818 a few German brethren in the wilderness, without a single house of worship; without a school, newspaper, circuit, or itinerant preacher, resolved to "*build the kingdom of Christ.*" For many years they toiled without much apparent encouragement. In

1831 they had but one circuit, Wooster, two feeble missions, and four itinerant preachers, to all of whom was paid less than \$300 00 a year. Now the same conference, including ERIE, which has grown out of it, numbers 7,333 members, 108 houses of worship, and a large number of local and traveling ministers.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE SANDUSKY CONFERENCE—NORTH-WESTERN OHIO.

It has been stated already that in 1822 Jacob Baulus, one of the earliest and most efficient preachers in Maryland, settled near Fremont, O. His home was located in the deep, dark forests of the Black Swamp. Wild game and wild men abounded. He was the first evangelical minister in that section of the country; and he not only preached to the new settlers, whenever opportunity was offered, but he opened his house and spread his table for evangelical ministers of all denominations.

A few preaching places were established, a few classes formed, and in 1829 the general conference recognized a circuit, called Sandusky circuit. At the next session of the Muskingum conference Jacob Baulus was elected presiding elder of the Sandusky district, and JOHN ZAHN was appointed to

travel the Sandusky circuit. The next year, 1830, Mr. Baulus was re-elected presiding elder, and I. HARRINGTON and J. HARRISON were placed on the circuit. Baulus, Zahn, Harrington, and Harrison, were the pioneer itinerant preachers in north-western Ohio.

Up to this time the prospects, in the north-western portion of the State, seemed to afford but little encouragement. Between the Muskingum conference and the Sandusky circuit there was, probably, more than a hundred miles of country unoccupied by the United Brethren church; much of it a wilderness, through which the traveler passed, not in rail-cars, at the rate of forty miles per hour, but over mud roads and unbridged streams, on horseback, or in old-fashioned stage-coaches, which frequently made but ten or twelve miles per day. It was a long and wearisome journey, in 1830, from Tuscarawas county to Sandusky county. From 1829 to 1834 the Sandusky circuit was supplied by the Muskingum conference.

Prior to 1833, however, a strong current of emigration set in toward the north-west; and among the emigrants were a number of United Brethren families, and some excellent local preachers.

GEORGE HISKEY, a sound-minded, hospitable, and able preacher, settled in Richland county, near Lexington; and some substantial laymen settled in the same inviting region. HENRY ERRET and JOHN SMITH, both excellent German preachers, settled near Gallion. PHILIP CRAMER located west of Findlay, in Hancock county. ISRAEL HARRINGTON, who was placed on the circuit in 1830, and who was a man of good judgment and influence, located on the Portage river; while HENRY KIMBERLIN, and JOHN and JACOB CRUM, all pillars in the church, and in the ministry, lifted up the standard near the Maumee, on Beaver creek, in Wood county. J. GARBBER, whose praise is in all the churches where he is known,—a plain, humble, zealous, worker, both as an itinerant and as a local preacher,—settled on Honey creek, near Melmore, in Seneca county. D. Strayer, C. Zook, and John Bowser pitched their tents west of the Maumee. Others can not be especially named. These emigrations prepared the way for a conference; and the general conference of 1833 very wisely made a conference of the Sandusky work.

On the 12th of May, 1834, the new conference held its first session, at the house



of PHILIP BRETZ, on Honey creek, in Seneca county. Samuel Heistand presided. There were present John Russel, Jacob Baulus, Geo. Hiskey, Jeremiah Brown, C. Zook, John Crum, W. T. Tracy, Jacob Bair, O. Strong, H. Erret, John Smith, S. Easterly, Philip Cramer, B. Moore, Daniel Strayer, Israel Herrington, Jacob Crum, H. Kimberlin, J. Fry, and J. Alsop.

Nearly all these ministers were local; and they had settled, with their families, and in most cases with some of their brethren, in various parts of the conference, and had laid the foundation of the church. It is but just to say that the influence of these men, if we may except two or three of them, who soon formed other relations, was salutary. Many of them are now standing in the same communities where they stood thirty years ago. The frosts of age have settled upon their heads; the wilderness into which they moved has disappeared; the church has grown up strong about them, and their voices are seldom heard in the councils of the church; but they enjoy largely the confidence of their brethren; they are earnest, zealous, and dearly beloved.

But to return. John Davis, Jacob Garber,

and Stephen Lillibridge were received at the first conference; and three more useful men have seldom been received at one conference. JOHN DAVIS soon entered the itineracy, and for many years labored with great faithfulness, much of the time as a presiding elder. On a salary of from \$75 to \$150, he traveled on horseback from Crawford Co., O., to Allen Co., Ind., four times a year, year after year. The roads were extremely bad, especially in the winter and spring, but he seldom missed an appointment, never complained, and always wore a smile as he entered the cabins of the west. He is now superannuated. His head is white, but he loves the church of Jesus, and is a genial, sweet-spirited saint, waiting for the coming of the Lord.

STEPHEN LILLIBRIDGE did more, perhaps, than any other man of his day, to extend the cause in the Sandusky conference. He was born January 31st, 1815; and in his eighteenth year he experienced religion and united with the church, three months after which he was moved to call sinners to repentance; and it soon became manifest that the holy missionary fire was kindled in his breast. Moved by this spirit, he had gone

into the Sandusky country, was admitted into the conference, and placed in Sandusky circuit. The stations stood thus:

Richland circuit: B. Moore, J. H. Drake. Sandusky circuit: J. Alsop, S. Lillibridge. Findlay mission: J. Eckert, by P. E. Owl Creek mission: Mr. Smith, by P. E. Maumee mission: W. T. Tracy. Mr. Smith soon returned from whence he came; Mr. Eckert was a German, did not join the conference, and his stay was only temporary; Mr. Moore was very useful for a period, but from some cause his sky was often beclouded. After years of partial separation from the church, he died while on the overland-route to the Pacific. Mr. Lillibridge was all that could have been desired as a Christian and as an evangelist. One who was well acquainted with him\* and is not addicted to flattery, writes: "To go where as yet the brethren had no name nor home, and where Christ was seldom preached by any ministry, and still less known, was his peculiar call, as it was his pleasure and delight. This led him, amid many difficulties, into a country which was comparatively a wilderness, both in a natural and in a moral sense;

\* H. G. Spayth, in *Telescope*, New Series, Vol. II., p. 32.



yet he lived long enough to see it blossom and bring forth precious fruit, while joy and hope, like flowers, sprang up along his path. Though poor—and during the eight years of his itineracy, his annual pay was less than a hundred dollars—and although he suffered much in body for want of suitable clothing during the winter seasons, yet a murmur, so far as known, never escaped his lips. From his diary it appears that, during his brief career, he preached nineteen hundred and thirty sermons." But to form any thing like a correct estimate of his labors, the reader must take into account the size of the missions which he traveled, and the character of the country through which he passed, sometimes on horseback, and not unfrequently afoot. The Black Swamp country, though now intersected with rail-roads, and dotted with well-improved farms and thriving villages, was a dreadful country for an itinerant minister in the days of Lillibridge. After forming many new societies, and winning hundreds to Christ, this devoted pioneer missionary, at the early age of twenty-eight, and on the 25th of May 1843, died near Findlay, O. He had appeared at the conference four weeks prior to his decease, in

feeble health, and had taken as his appointment, Sandusky circuit. But his work was done. "In view of death he was happy. He exhorted his young wife to be resigned, and his last words were

'Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are ;  
While on his breast I lean my head,  
And breathe my life out sweetly there.' "

In the year 1836 the Sandusky conference, which had held its first meeting only two years previously, was able to report seven fields of labor; and during that year six camp-meetings were held within its bounds. One of these was held near the Auglaize river, ten miles west of Findlay, at a place which, seven years before, was a total wilderness, over which only the Red man roamed. "It was an occasion," writes Mr. Baulus, "which I hope will never be forgotten by myself and many others. Israel's God was present in the sweetness of his love and mercy. Truly

'Jerusalem breaks forth in songs,  
And deserts learn the joy !'

As says Isaiah: 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even

with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it.' 'In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.' Praise the Lord! Fifteen years ago," continues Mr. Baulus, "I was the only United Brethren preacher in this district; now there are about thirty."

Since 1834 the progress of the cause in the north-western portion of Ohio has been healthful. But the most successful evangelists, and those who did most, after Mr. Lillibridge, to establish the cause in that part of the state, were raised up and put into the ministry by the conference itself. Among the earliest of these may be named J. Bever, M. Long, and J. C. Bright.

About the year 1835, DAVID LANDIS, a devoted layman, moved into Defiance Co., on the Maumee river; and he soon began to urge the Miami conference, from which he had moved, to send missionaries into that new region. Nothing effectual was done, however, until 1841, when HENRY KUMLER, jun., who had just been elected bishop, moved by that missionary spirit which has characterized

- his life, opened a mission in Defiance and adjoining counties. He spent the summer, fall, and winter, of 1841-'42, on this mission,



which proved to be a most successful one. He went out under the auspices of the Miami conference; without missionary funds, however. The work growing on his hands, by the advice of the brethren on the mission, he employed JONATHAN THOMAS as a co-laborer—a most excellent choice, as few men in the church have proved themselves to be abler preachers, or more successful evangelists. He also brought into the ministry of the United Brethren church Jos. MILLER, now of the Iowa conference, GEO. W. CHAPMAN of the Sandusky; and EZRA CRARY and JOHN D. MARTIN, both of whom have died at their posts. With these ministers Mr. Kumler went to the Sandusky conference, which met in the spring of 1842, where they were received, and the Maumee mission recognized as a part of the Sandusky work.

Ten years after the organization of the conference, a correspondent of the Telescope,\* writes—"We have now fourteen circuits and two missions, stretching from Richland Co., O., to north-eastern Indiana,—a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, embracing the territory watered by Sandusky, Portage, Maumee, and Little St. Joseph rivers. The past

\* H. G. Spayth.

year has been an eventful one to the churches. Many have been made to rejoice in Jesus Christ. Love-feasts have been free from partiality; full of the Holy Ghost; never better. The labors of the ministry here are truly arduous; but by divine aid the brethren have been able to meet them with increasing energy and unexampled success. With the new year the work appears to have begun afresh."

In 1853 the Michigan conference was set off from the Sandusky; and yet the Sandusky now numbers more than a hundred ministers, local and traveling, and more than seven thousand members.

These are a few of the facts connected with the rise of the United Brethren church in north-western Ohio.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WORK IN NORTHERN INDIANA AND  
KENTUCKY.

THE United Brethren were among the first to plant the standard of the cross in the wilds of northern Indiana. The first sermon preached by a United Brethren minister within the bounds of what is now known as St. Joseph conference, which embraces northern Indiana, and a strip of Michigan on the lake, was delivered at Isaac Lamb's, in Tippecanoe Co., A. D. 1830, by that indefatigable pioneer missionary and eloquent preacher, JOHN DENHAM, whose sun, alas, has set in darkness! The settlers, for several miles around Mr. Lamb's, gathered to hear him; and great interest was excited by his preaching. He was followed by Josiah Davis, then a young man, and highly esteemed. Mr. Davis succeeded in forming two societies,—one at Lamb's, and the other at T. Baker's, four miles distant. In 1833, JAMES GRIF-



FITH entered the new field. Quite a number of extensive revivals of religion occurred under his labors; and he formed several new classes, in addition to the two formed by Mr. Davis.

In the fall of 1834 WILLIAM DAVIS was sent out by the Wabash conference, to St. Joseph Co., near the north line of the state. He entered upon his work in the true spirit of a missionary, and preached at numerous places along the St. Joseph river, extending his labors into Berrien Co., Michigan. He formed some classes, gave the work an excellent character, and did much to establish the principles of the church.

In 1837 JAMES GRIFFITH was sent into the field opened by W. Davis, where he traveled extensively, hunting up and feeding many scattered sheep; but as a trifle only in the way of support could be furnished by the feeble societies in the wilderness, he was under the necessity of leaving the work in the spring of 1838. The summer which followed is still remembered by the old inhabitants as the "sickly summer." Many of the best members of the church died, and quite a number, becoming discouraged with the country, removed to other parts. Owing to these causes, and the want of a preacher,

three out of the four organized classes were disbanded; and, in all probability the former labor would have been entirely lost, had it not been for the following singular Providence.

A young man, living in that part of the state, named E. H. LAMB, had, for two or three years, felt it to be his duty to preach; and, after the mission was left without a preacher, and he saw the work going to ruin, his impressions became deep and constant. He was just commencing the business of life for himself, had laid his plans for the future,—was a man of engaging manners, well calculated to succeed; and his prospects for worldly success were flattering. But he could not rest. The call of Jesus was ever in his ear, and he concluded to forsake all and follow him. Accordingly he settled his business, prepared himself for the itinerant work, and started for the Wabash conference, which met that year near Crawfordsville, Ind., a distance of one hundred and forty miles. One hundred miles of that distance he went alone; and although he had no license to preach, and was without any recommendation whatever, he believed that he would be received into the conference and into the itineracy. The

conference, waiving all formalities received him, and appointed him to the forsaken St. Joseph circuit. On his first round he could do little more than visit from house to house, and attend upon, and pray for the sick. Frequently, as he rode along through the sparse settlements, he was called on to perform some necessary service for the suffering. On his second round he established eleven appointments, distributed through the counties of Elkhart, St. Joseph, and Laporte, Ind., and Berrien, Mich., which he filled regularly every three weeks. Soon after J. Davis, the presiding elder, and William Davis, the pioneer missionary, and T. Garregus, a local preacher, moved into St. Joseph county. Under the joint labors of these four preachers, the work was revived and became prosperous. Some new classes were formed and some old ones revived; and at the close of the year there were on the work six organized classes, all in a healthy condition.

During this time the Wild Cat circuit, the one first opened in northern Ind., had been faithfully sustained by various preachers, whose names we have not been able to obtain. In 1839 eighty-five members were added to the two circuits; and during the



same year JOHN TALBERT, upon his own responsibility, and depending wholly upon his own resources, preached in Fulton, Wabash, and Huntington counties, which were about midway between the St. Joseph and Wild Cat missions, where he formed one class, and established several appointments.

At the session of the Wabash conference for 1840, a new work was projected in Carroll and Cass counties, on which Mr. Sage was placed. In 1840 Asa Coho traveled the Wild Cat circuit, and labored efficiently; and Mr. Baker, though young, was useful on St. Joseph, where he organized two societies. On the Tippecanoe mission, traveled by E. H. Lamb and J. Orn, there were many valuable accessions to the church.

In 1834 JOSEPH TERREL, who, with his wife, was a member of the United Brethren church, emigrated to Fulton Co., Ind. For thirty miles of the way they surveyed and cut their own road through the wilderness. In the forests of Fulton county, with little society except Indians, who were numerous, they erected the family altar. Often did they speak of the happiness of other years, and pray that a minister of their own church might come to their neighborhood. The

autumn after their arrival, "we heard," writes Mr. Terrel, "that four families had camped on the creek, about a mile from where we resided. I went to visit them; and the first person I saw was an aged lady on her knees, with both hands lifted up in prayer. With joy I hastened home to inform my wife." These persons proved to be Methodists; and soon a prayer-meeting was started at Mr. T.'s house. In the fall of 1839 John Talbert, as before stated, opened a mission in Fulton and adjoining counties. "One day," writes Mr. Terrel, "while plowing in my field, about twenty rods from the road, I saw a man riding along, who looked so much like a United Brethren minister, that I started toward him to hail him; but thinking I might be mistaken, I returned to my plow. The stranger passed on to the next house; and thinking, perhaps, that the family he had passed were Brethren, made inquiry, and as a matter of course soon returned. He formed, at Terrel's, a class of eight members. This was the first society planted in a region of country extending one hundred and fifty miles, north and south. These incidents are related to show how great, often, are the religious wants of the pioneers of the church, how much they

appreciate religious society, and especially the visits of their own ministers, and how greatly the morality of the country is indebted to them for the interest which they manifest in establishing the institutions of Christianity.

But to return to our narrative. In the autumn of 1840 a camp-meeting was held near Joseph Terrel's, during which not less than fifty conversions to God occurred. Only eight tents were erected on the ground.

In August, 1841, another camp-meeting was held, on the same ground, which was, confessedly, one of the most powerful meetings ever held in that country. The ground was surrounded with tents, and a great number of people assembled. One incident occurred which deserves special notice.

Among the persons awakened at this meeting was JOSIAH TERREL, a man of considerable note in his neighborhood. Being one of Satan's recruiting officers, he delighted in sports of various kinds, played the violin well, and loved the dance. Drawn to the camp-meeting by curiosity, he was awakened, went forward to the altar, invited the attention of the people, and there made a public confession of his sinful life—expressed his determination to be a Christian, and then



knelt as a penitent at the mourner's bench. While he spoke, every eye was filled with tears; and after he knelt, his plaintive voice, pleading for mercy, could be distinctly heard above all the other voices. But he did not find peace at the meeting. He requested Bro. Lamb, on the evening after the meeting closed, to preach at his house, which he did. During the meeting Mr. Terrel arose, confessed how he had been attached to the fiddle, and had taught his children and neighbors to dance, asked forgiveness of all, and then deliberately taking down the offending instrument of music, he cast it into the fire. Soon after he found salvation, and began to preach; and, we may add, he proved himself a chosen vessel of the Lord.

The Lord of the harvest now began more rapidly to multiply the laborers in this widening field. At a quarterly conference held on St. Joseph circuit, in 1842, William Davis, the presiding elder, organized a missionary movement which operated very favorably for the cause. Three men, Joseph Terrel, Josiah Terrel, and T. J. Babcoke, had obtained license to preach; and Mr. Davis informed them that he wished to employ them all as missionaries. He told them frankly that

there was no missionary money to pay them—that they must depend upon the small sums given them by the people, looking for their principal reward in the world to come. They all consented, on these terms, to travel. Babcoke was sent toward Middleburg, Joseph Terrel toward Huntington, and Josiah to the region about Leesburg. Each of these missionaries, sent out from the quarterly conference by the presiding elder, was successful in planting the church in the new fields named. Thus did the work go on from year to year in northern Indiana.

While the borders of the church were being extended to the North and West, other laborers were pushing the Savior's conquests southward into KENTUCKY.

A few families of United Brethren emigrated to Kentucky in an early day; and among the number the devoted Baker may be named. But being far separated from any conference, they were absorbed by other religious societies. Between 1810 and 1830, occasional tours were made through portions of the state by our ministers, bishop Newcomer among the others.

But to JOHN M. BLAIR, a minister of the Indiana conference, belongs the credit of es-

establishing the first society of United Brethren in Christ, south of Green river, and in the heart of Kentucky.

He organized a society in Adair Co., Ky., in 1833, and traveled extensively through Adair and the adjoining counties, preaching faithfully; and God was with him. Many souls were converted under his labors, and he organized some good societies. During the first year of his labors he was joined by his brother, WILLIAM BLAIR, who proved to be a very efficient co-laborer. "It seemed," says William, "as if God was in our front and rear, during those years."

In the year 1837 these brothers attended the Indiana conference, of which John M. was a member, where William was licensed to preach. By this time doors had been opened in Cumberland, Russel, and Wayne counties, in all of which souls were won to Christ. Soon these faithful brothers were encouraged by other laborers raised up among their converts. The earliest of these were William Traylor and R. T. Leftwich,—the former, after a few years of faithful service, was called to his reward.

The Indiana conference sent out preachers from time to time, who visited the Kentucky



work, and gave it new life. In the year 1850, the annual conference was held in Adair Co., bishop Glossbrenner presiding. "This," says Mr. Blair, "gave great strength to the cause; for, be it remembered, we were greatly persecuted, even by those who claimed to be enlightened and evangelical Christians. Such would give out the impression that there were no United Brethren except a handful, in Adair Co., Kentucky, and that in a few years they would come to naught. The conference dissipated this error, and some others." In spite of the powers of darkness, the work continued to advance.

Remarking upon the obstacles in the way of progress, Mr. Blair very justly remarks: "We have passed through deep waters and fiery trials, because of our peculiar views of slavery and secret societies; but we have been careful to maintain the principles of the church, and we are not disposed to complain on account of persecutions. Our fathers in the Lord have suffered before us, and have got home, and we will meet them on the other shore, if faithful."

## CHAPTER XIX.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1837—A CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION—BISHOP HEISTAND—GENERAL  
CONFERENCE OF 1841—H. KUMLER, JR.

THE seventh general conference met at Germantown, Montgomery Co., O., May 9th, 1837. Bishop Heistand, who was then near the close of his life, delivered, at the opening of the conference, a very touching sermon. Eight annual conferences were represented, as follows:—

*Pennsylvania conference*:—Jacob Erb, Jacob Winters.

*Virginia conference*:—Jacob Rhinehart, J. J. Glossbrenner.

*Muskingum conference*:—Adam Hetzler, David Weimer.

*Sandusky conference*:—John Dorcas, George Hiskey.

*Scioto conference*:—John Coons, William Hanby.

*Miami conference*:—J. Fetherhuff, William Stubbs.

*Indiana conference:* — F. Whitcom, John Lopp.

*Wabash conference:* — F. Kenoyer, William Davis.

Bishops Heistand and Kumler presided, bishop Brown not being in attendance. No new conference was set off. Samuel Heistand, Henry Kumler, sen., and Jacob Erb, were elected bishops. John Russel, George Dresback, and Jonathan Dresback, were elected trustees of the Printing Establishment, W. R. Rhinehart was elected editor of the Telescope, and W. Hanby general book agent and treasurer. These details may be of little interest to the general reader, yet we think it necessary that they be given in a work of this kind.

The subject of the greatest interest, however, which came before the conference, related to a CONSTITUTION for the church. It was introduced by Mr. Rhinehart. He had drafted a Constitution, and, on the first day of the session, presented it to the conference, asking, by a motion, that the subject be taken up and considered. This motion, after considerable discussion, was adopted. The matter being now fairly before the conference, on motion of Mr. Hanby, it was "Resolved



that a Constitution for the better regulation of the church be adopted." The draft presented by Mr. Rhinehart was then read, and examined, by items, amended as desired, and adopted by a unanimous vote of the conference.

The conference, however, did not regard its action as final, or as at all binding on the church. The delegates had not been instructed to make a constitution; and, recognizing themselves as only the representatives and servants of the church, they caused the instrument to be printed, accompanied by a circular, calling the attention of the church to the same, and asking that the delegates to the general conference of 1841 be instructed to adopt, amend, or reject the same.

It was also agreed that to the general conference of 1841 Pennsylvania conference should send 4 delegates; Virginia 2; Scioto 4; Miami 3; Wabash 2; Indiana 3; Muskingum 2; Sandusky 2. These figures indicate, pretty accurately, the relative strength of the conferences in 1837.

Between 1837 and 1841, the church was favored with numerous revivals of religion. The columns of the organ of the church contain numerous notices like the following:—

"Mourners poured forward to the anxious benches, it was supposed, to the number of one hundred or more; and it appeared as fast as the Lord healed the broken-hearted, the arrows of conviction fastened on others. Seventy-three joined church. During the meeting a conversation among the wicked was overheard by one of the brethren. While all were astonished at the work, one of the number proposed to the company that they would go up to the altar, and see what was going on; another observed that they had better stay away; for, said he, 'the preachers are so well skilled in their business that their voice has an electrifying influence, and if people get near them they will be so shocked that they will be sure to fall,' so they all agreed to stay away."—[*Geo. Bonebrake, Miami conference, 1838.*]

"Christian professors have been renewed, and sinners converted. Within the short space of seven weeks, sixty persons have united with the church; and we trust God has enrolled their names in the book of life."—[*E. Vandemark, Scioto conference, 1839.*]

"Our third protracted meeting was held at Greencastle, Pa. The altar was crowded with mourners, and many were emancipated from

sin. Upward of sixty have united with the church since conference."—[*J. Ritter, Pennsylvania, 1839.*

"God was in the camp day and night, from the commencement to the close of the meeting. We had the pleasure of seeing sinners awakened, mourners converted, backsliders reclaimed, and believers sanctified."—[*D. S. Spessard, Va., 1840.*

"A number were brought to yield to the heavenly influences of the Spirit of God. Fifty-seven joined church during this meeting."—[*G. A. Shuey, near Boonsborough, Md., 1840.*

"Our altar was crowded with mourners, and many were converted. Some were converted, also, at their homes, some in the woods; and in almost every direction the cries of the distressed were heard. Seventy have been received into the church, and the work is still going on."—[*F. Whitcom, Lewisburg, O., 1840.*

"The meeting continued eight days, during which time eighty souls were happily converted to God. Seventy of this number joined church."—[*Jas. McGaw, Muskingum conference, 1840.*

To the old church in Baltimore fifty members were added, during a revival in 1840.



In Indiana, in 1839, at Abington, thirty were added to the church; at a camp-meeting in Wayne Co. there were, it is believed, seventy-five conversions, and fifty were added to the church; and on Flat Rock circuit there were, during the same year, two hundred accessions. These are given only as specimens from the correspondence of the laborers in the vineyard.

During the year 1838 one of the venerable superintendents of the church was taken from the responsible post assigned him, to his reward. His character and services demand more than a passing notice. Reference is had to bishop Heistand.

SAMUEL HEISTAND was born in Shenandoah (now Page) Co., Va., March 3rd, 1781. His parents belonged to the Renewed United Brethren, commonly known as Moravians.\* His mother was a native of Germany, and was a woman of more than ordinary intelligence and piety. He was the youngest of six sons. Two of his brothers, Abraham and John, were ministers in the United Brethren church; the first named was a man of much ability and influence. When quite young,

\* This fact, with most others relating to his personal history, is obtained from letters from Tobias and Manuel Heistand, filed in Telescope office.

Samuel experienced religion; but, like too many, he lost his first love. In 1806, about two years after his removal to Ohio, he was aroused from his partially backslidden state, under the preaching of that faithful man of God, George Benedum. He soon joined Mr. Benedum as a pioneer evangelist, in the wilds of Ohio, and was nicknamed Mr. B.'s "apprentice." He could hardly have been placed under a better master. He was licensed to exhort, by the Miami conference, in 1819, and to preach in 1820. He proved to be a very efficient itinerant preacher, and shared, until the day of his death, largely in the confidence of his brethren.

He was secretary of the third general conference, was a delegate to the fourth, and also to the sixth, which convened in Ross Co., in 1833, at which he was chosen to the superintendency, in connection with Henry Kumler, sen., to fill the place made vacant by the death of Christian Newcomer.

He took an active and leading part in the business and labors of the church, from 1821 to the period of his death in 1838, as the records of the Scioto annual, and of the general, conference show. He was warmly attached to evangelical religion, took great

interest in the benevolent operations of the church, possessed an earnest missionary spirit, heartily espoused the cause of the religious press, then feeble and poor in our church, and was opposed to slavery and to secret societies, especially to Freemasonry.

The last general conference which he attended, and by which he was re-elected bishop, was, perhaps, quite as important, in the influence it exerted upon the cause, as any which has been held. He opened the conference with a sermon which moved many to tears; and he entered into the important business which came up with rather more than his accustomed earnestness. On the 9th of October, 1838, he died. Until a short time prior to his death he retained his wonted vigor and strength of mind. In conversation with his brother Joseph, four days previous to his demise, he said that he had, during the day, "felt the sweet drawings of heaven more powerfully than ever before;" and after speech had failed him, the name "heaven," pronounced in his hearing, would cause his face to be lit up with a smile.

He was a man of excellent social qualities, warmly attached to his large family and his country home, noted for his hospitality, no



one ever going away hungry from his door. Cheerful even to vivacity, like all men of such temperament, he was subject to seasons of reaction from the zenith of bliss to the depths of despondency.

The eighth general conference met May 10th, 1841, at Dresback's church, Pickaway Co., O. H. Kumler and Jacob Erb were in attendance; and also the following delegates:—

*Pennsylvania conference*:—J. Russel, Jacob Roop.

*Virginia conference*:—J. J. Glossbrenner, W. R. Coursey.

*Muskinnyum conference*:—A. Biddle, James McGaw.

*Sandusky conference*:—H. G. Spayth, G. Hiskey.

*Alleghany conference*:—J. Ritter, G. Miller.

*Scioto conference*:—William Hastings, John Coons, J. Montgomery, E. Vandemark.

*Miami conference*:—Henry Kumler, jr., F. Whitcom.

*Indiana conference*:—Henry Bonebrake, Jos. A. Ball, J. G. Eckels.

*Wabash conference*:—Josiah Davis, William Davis.

After the preliminary business was disposed of, the subject of a constitution was

again introduced, and discussed with more warmth than ever. At length a vote was taken, which resulted in favor of a constitution; and a committee, composed of one delegate from each conference, reported a constitution, substantially the one that had been before the church for four years, which was, after some slight amendments, adopted. As the reader will be pleased to see it in these pages, we quote it entire:—

### CONSTITUTION.

WE, the members of the Church of the UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST, in the name of God, do, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, as well as to produce and secure a uniform mode of action, in faith and practice, also to define the powers and the business of quarterly, annual and general conferences, as recognized by this church, ordain the following articles of CONSTITUTION.

#### ARTICLE I.

*Section 1.* All ecclesiastical power herein granted, to make or repeal any rule of discipline, is vested in a general conference, which shall consist of elders, elected by the

members in every conference district throughout the society; provided however, such elders shall have stood in that capacity three years in the conference district to which they belong.

*Sec. 2.* General conference is to be held every four years; the bishops to be considered members, and presiding officers.

*Sec. 3.* Each annual conference shall place before the society the names of all the elders eligible to membership in the general conference.

## ARTICLE II.

*Section 1.* The general conference shall define the boundaries of the annual conferences.

*Sec. 2.* The general conference shall, at every session, elect bishops from among the elders throughout the church, who have stood six years in that capacity.

*Sec. 3.* The business of each annual conference shall be done strictly according to discipline; and any annual conference acting contrary thereunto, shall, by impeachment, be tried by the general conference.

*Sec. 4.* No rule or ordinance shall at any time be passed, to change or do away the confession of faith as it now stands, nor to destroy the itinerant plan.



*Sec. 5.* There shall no rule be adopted that will infringe upon the rights of any as it relates to the mode of baptism, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, or the washing of feet.

*Sec. 6.* There shall be no rule made that will deprive local preachers of their votes in the annual conferences to which they severally belong.

*Sec. 7.* There shall be no connection with secret combinations, nor shall involuntary servitude be tolerated in any way.

*Sec. 8.* The right of appeal shall be inviolate.

### ARTICLE III.

The right, title, interest, and claim of all property, whether consisting in lots of ground, meeting-houses, legacies, bequests or donations of any kind, obtained by purchase or otherwise, by any person or persons, for the use, benefit, and behoof of the church of the United Brethren in Christ, is hereby fully recognized and held to be the property of the church aforesaid.

### ARTICLE IV.

There shall be no alteration of the foregoing Constitution, unless by request of two-thirds of the whole society. May 19, 1841.

W. Hanby was elected editor of the Telescope, and George and Jonathan Dresback, and W. Leist, trustees. A parent missionary board was elected, and it was resolved that a German paper be established in Baltimore. H. Kumler, sen., and Jacob Erb, were re-elected bishops, and H. Kumler, jun., and John Coons, were also elected to the general superintendency. The session continued ten days, and was a remarkably pleasant one.

HENRY KUMLER, jun., one of the newly-elected bishops, was born in Lancaster Co., Pa., Jan. 16th, 1801; converted to God in his 14th year, and elected leader of a class; received license to preach in 1819; spent sixteen very unhappy years in a half-local relation; entered the itineracy, without reserve, in 1835; was elected presiding elder in the Miami conference in 1836; which office he filled until his election to the superintendency, in 1841. He has served as missionary in the Maumee country, in south-western Missouri, and in Nebraska; and he is now devoting himself, in his old age, with undiminished zeal and industry, to the toilsome German mission work. No church has ever had a more persevering servant. As a superintendent, from 1841 to 1845, his influence was excellent.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

LET us now turn our attention from the outward to the inward life of the church—to that higher Christian life, the bare mention of which makes the heart beat more quickly. Enoch walked with God three hundred years; and in every age since Enoch, persons have lived who have attained to such eminence in holiness, that their example and their words stir the soul with a peculiar power. We have all felt that nothing is so eloquent as a holy life. Who can read Thomas a Kempis, Madame Guyon, Madame Catharine Adorna, Fletcher, Upham, or Mrs. Palmer, without feeling a hungering and thirsting after righteousness which no ordinary experience or attainment can satisfy?

In the year 1844, a revival of the spirit of holiness was commenced in our church which is interesting in its character, and which has, without doubt, exerted a wide-spread influ-



ence upon the religious life of many people. We call it a revival, because the fathers believed that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin; and many of them tested by experience, and boldly preached, the doctrine of a present and full salvation. Mr. Otterbein entertained the most enlarged views of the power of God to save unto the uttermost; and probably few men have sustained the doctrine he preached by a purer life. In a letter to an enemy of this doctrine he said:—

“You ask what sanctification is, and what comes to pass thereby. Here the best for us to do would be, that we both pray for the spirit of sanctification, since before then we can not, by any means, comprehend it. The word of God speaks, however, concerning the subject, plainly enough, making a difference between justification and sanctification. And this difference accords also with reason; for, is it not one thing when Pharoah takes Joseph from prison, and another when he enrobes him in kingly apparel, and sets him a prince over the whole land of Egypt?”

And bishop Newcomer, who was a leading evangelist in the church from 1780 to 1830, was a preacher and a witness of this blessed

truth. Of an early period in his Christian experience he writes:—

“So I went on alternately, sometimes happy, at other times not so; at times full of spirit and courage, at other times disheartened; but whenever I had a longing desire to find Jesus precious to my soul, he would manifest himself to me, by blessing me; then I was ready to do and suffer for Jesus’ sake all things. \* \* \* In this manner I went on for some time, believing it to be the will of God concerning me, to enter the kingdom of heaven through severe trials and manifold tribulations. However, my opinion was soon changed on this point, for reading, ‘The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.’ I concluded with the poet:

‘Why should the children of a king,  
Go mourning all their days?’

So I determined by grace divine, to obtain that perfect love which casteth out fear, and is able to rejoice in tribulation, and say, ‘Although thou slay me, yet will I praise thee.’”—*Journal*, p. 12.

He seems to have lived fifty years in a state of constant communion with God, and complete consecration to him. “My poor

soul," he writes, "will rely on thee, and thee alone; in thee will I put my trust, and claim all thy promises for my own. Only teach me to submit totally to thy will, and prepare me fully for eternal glory." Again he writes: "O Lord, *my all is thine.*"—*Journal*, p. 311.

It is not of a new doctrine then, that we speak, or of a new experience, but of an old doctrine—old as the fathers, nay, old as the Bible. But to the revival.

During the year 1844, JESSE WILSON, a pious minister of the Scioto conference, while sinking rapidly under consumption, obtained what he regarded as the blessing of entire sanctification. On Christmas day, a few weeks previous to his death, while praying in the house of a neighbor, he was led out in an unusual manner for the blessing which he had long sought, and which he believed might be obtained by faith. He seemed to forget the friends who were about him, and to talk with God as if alone with him. "With every sentence uttered, his confidence seemed to increase, until he was enabled to claim the promise. In an instant he cried out with tears, "I have got it! O Lord, I will praise thee,—I will confess thee!" From that hour until his decease, he preached to all who visited



him upon the subject of holiness, and many were convinced and led into the possession of the blessing through his instrumentality.

A few days after Jesse Wilson professed the blessing, DAVID EDWARDS, then stationed preacher in Circleville, also claimed it; and, as he was the principal instrument employed in carrying forward this work, and was for many years its most prominent advocate, the reader will be pleased, no doubt, to see his experience, at length, in these pages.

"My parents," says Mr. E., "were strict Presbyterians, and taught me to pray regularly night and morning, from my earliest recollection. They also taught me the necessity of a change of heart through faith in Christ. At about seven years of age, I was impressed that I would be called to the ministry. From this time forward, I sought the Lord in secret, and led a moral life. In the Sabbath-school, as well as under the preaching of God's word, I would often weep, and pray earnestly for the pardon of my sins,—but I obstinately refused to offer myself for church membership, until some time in the winter of 1834, while attending a revival meeting among the United Brethren in Fairfield Co., O., I became again powerfully con-

victed. And having an impression that this would be my last call, I resolved to commence seeking for life, and to leave no means unemployed. I joined the United Brethren church, as a seeker, and a little over three months after, obtained a clear and satisfactory evidence of my acceptance with God. This occurred on the evening of the 28th of May, in the house of Jacob Bullenback.

"A short time after this I felt that I needed a more thorough renovation of spirit. At times I felt the remains of shame, pride, unbelief, and many forms of selfishness in my heart, which pained me exceedingly. About this time the writings of Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke, and Watson, and the biographies of some of the early Wesleyan preachers, fell into my hands. These in the providence of God were made a great blessing to me. I became satisfied that there was for me, for all, a more complete salvation than that generally possessed, and began in earnest to seek it. I sought help from older brethren; but alas, nearly all with whom I conversed discouraged me. I still contended for the doctrine, and sought the blessing by reading, prayer, and fasting, and by efforts to consecrate myself to God. I found by searching

the Scriptures, that the commands, provisions, promises and inspired prayers, all combined to hold forth a full salvation—such a salvation as I did not possess; and hence I became more and more confirmed in the conviction that it was my duty and privilege to attain to such a state, though few among my immediate associates sympathized with me. Thus I continued till the year 1843, when I had for a colleague Bro. Jesse Wilson, who was a firm believer in the doctrine, having once enjoyed the blessing. We both commenced anew to seek definitely for it, and preached it as clearly as we could without enjoying it. And although we failed, that year, to obtain it ourselves, yet a number of the members on the circuit did enter the glorious rest, some of whom witnessed a good profession before many witnesses till called home to be with Jesus. Bro. Wilson embraced the blessing on Christmas day 1844—just eight days before I was enabled to claim it—and was in a few weeks taken up to glory.

“The following are some of the particulars of my experience concerning the reception of the Spirit’s witness. When I was placed on the Circleville station, having always before



traveled large circuits, I thought this year I would have time to read and pray more, and must obtain the victory my soul longed for. I accordingly sought it most earnestly, day and night, in public and private. But the more earnestly I sought, the farther I seemed from the object of my pursuit. My heart seemed full of all manner of evil, although I was generally greatly blest in preaching, and my outward life was as regular as ever it was before or since. I had meetings appointed especially to seek for holiness, and many of the members sympathized with me, and attended the meetings.

"On the second of January, 1845, having an appointment a few miles in the country, I started about sundown, exceedingly oppressed with a sense of my unworthiness and unholiness. While reflecting upon how poorly qualified I was with such an unholy heart, to preach a pure gospel to others, it was suggested:—

"'You have been seeking a clean heart for ten years, and you are further from it now than ever before. You had better now give it up, and no longer make a fool of yourself and expose yourself to persecution. Why not live peaceably as most other Christians live?'

"I answered, 'God says, *Be ye holy*, and it is plainly my duty to seek it and obtain it, whether others do or not.'

"The next suggestion was—for by this time the thoughts presented to my mind occupied my entire attention, as much so as if I had heard an audible voice,—'If it is by faith, you may have it now before you preach,' and I began to pray. In an instant these words were presented to my mind as never before; 'Ask, and receive.' 'Why, Lord,' said I, 'I have asked a thousand times.' 'True,' said the same inward voice, 'You asked, but you have not received or taken the offered blessing.' I at once saw the difficulty. At that instant a revelation was given upon the subject of faith which was worth more to me than all the theology I ever read upon it. I remembered many a time in my former history when the blessing was in reach—I could, as it were, *see* it, and almost say, *it is mine*. But this *receiving faith* was wanting. I saw the blessing held out, and with melting heart and tearful eyes, said, 'Lord, I do receive—I am thine and thou art mine!' It was enough—my heart was filled with love, and I said 'Glory to God!' That was a great turning point in my religious life. I had

from that hour a depth of peace, a constancy of faith, and a clearness of views of Divine Providence never before enjoyed. Whatever inconsistencies may have marked my life since that time, I am convinced that the above was a real and Scriptural experience. And my only regret now is, after nearly sixteen years, that I have not made more proficiency in it, and lived it out more perfectly. But to-day I stand upon the same platform, and the merciful Savior who saved me then, kindly pardons all past delinquencies, and is still the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Glory to *his holy name*."

After Mr. Edwards had entered into possession of the higher life, he became a very zealous and successful teacher of the doctrine. Mr. Hanby, then editor of the organ of the church, and about thirty of the most efficient preachers, together with a large number of the laymen, of the Scioto conference, made a public profession of the blessing; and a few months after Mr. Edwards experienced the blessing, he was elected editor of the Religious Telescope. In this position he had the ear of the whole church; and to the advocacy of the doctrine of entire sanctification, as a distinct blessing, he brought all the ardor which



a firm faith, and a fresh experience can give.

Through this means the revival spread into other conferences, and in many places preachers and people became interested in the subject, and witnesses were raised up. Not content with the columns of the church paper, Mr. Edwards, in 1846, prepared and published a volume of 256 pages, entitled "THE PERFECT CHRISTIAN; or, a Condensed View of Bible Holiness as taught in the Scriptures," a work which, although very poorly printed, had quite an extensive sale.

Numerous objections were raised to the views urged by Mr. Edwards. Many contended that the new birth effects a complete purification of the heart; and that *growth* only is required subsequent to that change. Some argued that entire sanctification is a gradual work, and that it is seldom, if ever, consummated until the close of life. Others, agreeing that the high state of grace described as entire sanctification might be obtained, looked with disfavor upon its profession.

The general influence of the movement was highly beneficial. As all agreed that conversion was only the commencement of the Christian life,—that there were within the Christian's reach very high attainments in

holiness—many who disagreed with Mr. E. on some minor points, were excited by the discussion to take higher ground. The inward life was more assiduously cultivated; and an idea, not new, but brought out with remarkable distinctness in this discussion, became fixed in the faith and in the phraseology of the church,—we mean the idea of *immediate and entire consecration to God*.

And the time when especial prominence was given to this idea was opportune. A church which had been long nurtured, and carefully preserved from the popular sins of the times, was about commencing an unwonted expansion; her numbers were soon to be doubled and trebled; and she was to assume new and enlarged responsibilities, and her principles—her faithfulness to the truth—were to be thoroughly tested.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHURCH IN IOWA—BURNS, TROUP, SELLERS,  
EVERHART, AND BYRD—DES MOINES, MO.

IOWA, a part of the vast tract of country purchased from France in 1803, under the general name of Louisiana, was separated from Wisconsin, and organized as a territory in 1838. Two years before the organization of the territory of Iowa, JOHN BURNS, a faithful local minister of the United Brethren church, crossed the Mississippi, and settled in Lee Co., Iowa. About the same time CHRISTIAN TROUP, a minister of the Wabash conference, a good and true man, settled in Linn county, where he sowed imperishable seed. These two venerable ministers were, so far as we know, the pioneer missionaries of the United Brethren church, west of the Mississippi. They both commenced to preach, opening and sustaining regular appointments, and supporting themselves with the labor of



their own hands. They did not, however, organize any societies immediately.

In 1840 Mr. Ryan, a layman, settled in Henry county. He found himself without the society of United Brethren, and without religious society of any kind. Swearing, drinking, and dancing, were the prevalent sins of the country about him. Maintaining his integrity, he longed for the establishment of religious worship, and was moved, as he believed, by the Spirit, to preach. At length a disaffected Mormon visited the neighborhood and preached. Mr. Ryan attended; and while there he met a father Edgington, who stated that he had been in Iowa three or four years, and that before that day he had not had an opportunity of attending public worship. "He asked me," says Mr. Ryan, "if I belonged to Hinkles' (the semi-Mormon) church? I replied, I belong to the United Brethren. He clapped his hands, and thanked God that he had found a United Brethren in Iowa! 'They had,' he said, 'preached at his house in Ohio;' and he invited me to establish an appointment at his house in Iowa." The appointment was made, and on the fourth Sunday in October, 1841, the nucleus of a class was formed. "I opened the doors of

the church," writes Mr. R., "and father and mother Edgington gave me their hands as members of the church; and there we covenanted with God to pray for a revival of religion, and that the Lord would send us United Brethren preachers." At the next appointment three others joined; and soon after four others. The work of the Lord now broke out in a powerful manner; and some of the most hardened sinners in father Edgington's neighborhood were converted. Sometimes the meeting continued until three in the morning. During this first revival in our church in Iowa, nine were received into the church; and among the number was the fiddler, well known as the leader of the rude dances so common and so pernicious in frontier life. Hunting, and shooting, and card-playing on Sundays now ceased in the neighborhood, and the people were drawn to the house of the Lord—then, it is true, a frontier cabin. Lewis Hoffman was elected leader of the class. In the month of March, 1842, the members of this class, hearing of Christian Troup for the first time, sent for him to "come over and help them." He promptly responded to the call; visited them on the 1st of April; remained a week; received six

more members into the church; which number, added to the twenty-eight received by Mr. Ryan, made thirty-four, in all. He also ratified, as a regular minister of the church, what had been done. This, it appears, was the first class of United Brethren organized in Iowa. Mr. Troup also gave Mr. Ryan a permit to preach, and appointed a quarterly meeting, to be held May 10th, 1842, at Yankee Grove, Linn county.

In April, 1839, A. A. SELLERS, a native of Virginia, who had for some time resided in Indiana and Illinois, settled in Lee Co., Iowa. He had not received license to preach, but believed it to be his duty to labor as a minister in the vineyard; and being bold, zealous, and enterprising, and of ardent temperament, he became a valuable co-laborer of Mr. Burns. Uniting their labors, they enlarged the field opened by Mr. Burns, and commenced holding two-day meetings in various places; in Lee and Henry counties principally.

In 1841 JOHN EVERHART, a devoted servant of God, was transferred from the Indiana to the Wabash conference; and as that conference then extended westward to the setting sun, Mr. E. selected the newly-opened



territory of Iowa as his field of missionary toil. He went to his mission, as many of our pioneers have gone, without one cent of missionary money in his pocket, and with little hope of obtaining any. But he had a mind to work, although he was obliged to earn his bread by breaking the prairies. In 1842 Mr. Burns, having an appointment at Montrose, in Lee county, met Mr. Everhart for the first time. They united their labors at Montrose, where they formed a society.

In 1842 F. R. S. BYRD, of the Scioto conference, emigrated to the new territory, and settled in Henry county. He set about the work of the Lord immediately, and on the 24th of the same month of his arrival, organized the second class, so far as we know, of the United Brethren west of the Mississippi.\*

Early in the summer Mr. Byrd, accompanied by two other Brethren, got into a wagon, and started out in pursuit of some United Brethren of whom they had heard;

\* If we should regard the organization at father Edgington's by Mr. Ryan, who was without license as a minister, as irregular, then the class organized by Mr. Byrd must be considered the first regular class in Iowa. The class at Mr. Byrd's was regularly incorporated August 21st, 1842.

and after several days travel, they reached father Edgington's. They there learned what had been done by Bros. Ryan and Troup. Mr. Byrd held a meeting at father Edgington's, of four day's continuance, baptized nine persons, in the clear waters of Cedar river, and received some twenty members into the fellowship of the church.

Soon after Bros. Burns and Sellers met at Montrose, they agreed together to go out and find a United Brethren minister of whom they had heard in Henry county. After a day's travel over the interminable meadows of Iowa, and just as the sun was going down into a sea of grass, they obtained the first distinct information of him. After seven miles of travel next morning, they reached Mr. Byrd's house, where a meeting had been appointed. "Here we had," writes Mr. Sellers, "a glorious meeting. The Holy Ghost came down and filled the place."

The quarterly meeting appointed by Mr. Troup was held May 10th, 1842, and was attended by Troup, Byrd, Ryan, Hoffman, Edgington, and others. It was an excellent meeting, and the first quarterly meeting held by the United Brethren west of the Mississippi. At this meeting Ira B. Ryan received

license to preach. A second and more important meeting was held in Henry county, Sept. 10th, 1842. At this meeting all the preachers and exhorters in the territory met for the first time. Christian Troup was elected presiding elder. Each preacher and exhorter gave an account of himself and his labors. Several persons were licensed to preach, and among the number A. A. Sellers, who had been laboring for some time without a formal license. Several also were licensed to exhort. The sacraments,—baptism and the Lord's supper,—were administered; and the pioneer disciples, following literally the Lord's example, washed each others feet. They had a joyful time together. "I never shall forget," writes Mr. Sellers, "the sermon I heard from Mr. Everhart on this occasion. It seemed as if, while he was preaching, the dew of heaven descended and was distilled into every heart. At length the feeling became so overpowering that Mr. Troup could restrain himself no longer; and, springing to his feet, he clasped the preacher in his arms, and shouted Glory, with a loud voice. Truly this was like unto one of the days of the Son of Man." After agreeing to hold an annual or business meeting on



the 1st of March, 1843, and arranging some other matters in relation to co-operation at large meetings, the brethren separated, and each went joyfully to his prairie home and to his toil.

John Everhart now commenced his itinerant labors systematically, embracing in his wide field nearly the whole of the territory occupied by the church in southern Iowa. Many precious revivals of religion occurred during the winter, under his labors. The winter was extremely cold, and an itinerant at that day, who had to cross the wide prairies between the sparse settlements in the groves, ran many risks of perishing. To illustrate:

The time for the conference proposed at the second quarterly meeting being at hand, Bros. Everhart, Sellers, and Collins, set out for the meeting. The reader must have Mr. Sellers' own statement of the journey.

"The weather was extremely cold. Brother Everhart got his nose and face badly frozen. The night was approaching, and we called at a house to stay for the night; but we could not gain admittance. At a second house we shared the same fate, but were informed that at a brick house on the opposite side of the grove, fifteen miles distant, we could

probably stay. Our hearts began to quail. Bro. Everhart proposed to return to the house, procure an ax and some fire, and camp in the grove. I told him we would perish if we attempted it. This was the time of the great comet between the earth and sun, and of the coldest weather ever known in Iowa. After holding a short council, we resolved to push across the prairie. Letting our horses out at full speed, we made good time, and just as the sun went down we reached the brick house. Almost perished, we knocked at the door with anxious hearts. Who can tell our joy when we received a cordial welcome from a good Baptist brother named William Miller, who entertained us as if we had been angels, free of charge. Heaven will reward him."

The conference convened on the 1st of March, the time previously agreed upon. The preachers present were Christian Troup, John Everhart, Ira B. Ryan, F. R. S. Byrd, A. A. Sellers, John Burns, and J. Kephart, seven in all. Classes reported, 13; members organized into class, 194. Some members scattered abroad and not reported in the above. Finding themselves hundreds of miles from the nearest conference, the Wa-

bash, to which they properly belonged, and in circumstances which demanded well organized effort, they wisely entered into a conference, for the transaction of annual conference business. Preachers were examined, presiding elders elected, fields of labor laid off and supplied with laborers, and other annual conference business was attended to. Byrd was elected presiding elder for the north district, Troup for the south, and Everhart continued to labor as a general missionary, as he had been instructed to do by the Wabash conference.

Early in the autumn following the conference, the presiding elder in the Wabash conference visited the territory, and held a quarterly meeting at Columbus City. At this meeting the work was divided into three districts, over which were placed as presiding elders, J. Peters, J. Lindsay, and John Everhart; but as Peters and Lindsay both soon left the work, J. Everhart was once more required to travel over the entire field for another winter.

The annual business meeting, or conference, of March waked up a good deal of interest in the Wabash conference; and they passed a resolution requesting bishop Henry Kumler, jr.



and John Denham, to visit the territory, and organize a conference, to be known as the Wabash branch conference of Iowa. Accordingly, May 19th, 1844, the contemplated conference convened at Columbus City. Those recognized as regular conference members, and as constituting the conference at its opening, were Kumler, Denham, Everhart, and Burns. Two other persons were received on transfer, after which the other ministers of the territory, who had been licensed at the informal quarterly and annual conferences, Sellers, Ryan, Byrd, etc., were received into the conference. This was perhaps an unnecessary formality, because the Wabash conference could only by an informality, order the holding of a branch session in Iowa. However, it was done, and, doubtless, well done. All the properly-authorized preachers of the territory were present at this conference, and their names stand thus: J. Everhart, J. Burns, A. A. Sellers, F. R. S. Byrd, J. B. Ryan, C. Troup, J. Denham, D. Shaffer, M. Garrison, D. C. Barrows, G. S. Clingan. The work was divided into three general missionary districts—the southern was located between the Des Moines and Skunk rivers; the middle, between the Skunk and Iowa rivers; and the

north, north of the Iowa river. Christian Troup and John Everhart were again elected presiding elders.

Thus did the work of the Lord, under the labors of United Brethren pioneers, take its rise in the territory of Iowa. Commencing with the settlement of the country, the church had a healthy and vigorous growth. The work was extended northward to the Minnesota line, and southward into Missouri. In 1853 the conference was divided; the northern portion retaining the old name, Iowa, and the southern taking the name of the beautiful river, Des Moines, which passes through it; and in 1857 the Missouri conference was set off. The organization of the last-named conference, however, did not take place until 1859. It has since had a vigorous growth. We have now in Iowa, two vigorous conferences, a good college, scores of efficient ministers, and thousands of excellent members.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## TRIAL FOR THE OTTERBEIN CHURCH PROPERTY—NINTH GENERAL CONFERENCE—STATISTICS.

IN the year 1846 the great trial for the Otterbein church property in Baltimore, terminated.

"Be it remembered," we quote from Mr. Spayth, who is thoroughly acquainted with the whole case, "that in the year 1774, William Otterbein assumed the pastoral charge of a congregation, in Baltimore, which had withdrawn from the German Reformed church; but the long-continued war which commenced soon after, dispersed the greater number of the members. On the return of peace, by the gathering together of former members, and by the accession of a considerable number of converts to Christ, the society found itself sufficiently established to form a church constitution, and to adopt disciplinary rules for its own government; and on the 1st day of January, 1785, they drew up and signed



the instrument found in the first volume of this work.\*

"When Otterbein was absent from Baltimore, during the quarter of a century which followed, his pulpit was supplied by his brethren, the United Brethren preachers,—but at no time by any preacher of the German Reformed church. And on the demise of Mr. Otterbein, this congregation asked to be supplied, and were regularly supplied, by pastors of the United Brethren in Christ, with whom they had been so long identified, and to whom they were bound by their church constitution.†

"In the year 1840, twenty-seven years after the departure of Mr. Otterbein, J. J. Mayer, Jacob Bier, and L. Radclif, filed a petition in the Baltimore County Court, stating that Otterbein church ought to be a German Reformed church; that since the death of Mr. Otterbein the conference of the United Brethren in Christ had exercised the pastoral care of said church, and that Lewis Wise, G. Kraft, J. Messersmith, and George Sickles, claim to be elders; George Rosegaw, E. Weigand, C. Kline, and F. Kraft, trustees, and John Russel pastor of said church. The

\* Page 231. † Item 14, page 241.

petitioners therefore pray that to these official members may be issued a writ of mandamus, . . . that they be required to order an election of a pastor to be had by said church, and that the pastor so chosen shall be subject to the usages and government of the German Reformed church," etc., etc.

"The petition was presented to the Court on the 27th day of April 1840, and the Court ordered that the elders, trustees, and minister of said church, on Monday, May 11th following, appear and show cause why the prayer of the petitioners should not be granted. The respondents and petitioners both appeared, and the Court, after hearing the case, gave judgment, in strong and decided terms, in favor of the defendants, leaving the petitioners to pay the costs of the suit." Thus ended the first trial.

Two years subsequently the Otterbein church was under the necessity of expelling some members, who were also members of the vestry. These expelled members drew after them, through sympathy, some other official members. The vacancies thus created, were filled in strict accordance with the constitution of the congregation. Here the matter should have rested; but the expelled and seced-

ing members united together, and assumed to be the vestry of the Otterbein church! That they might carry out their purposes, they entered into a conspiracy with Rev. Samuel Gutelius, a minister of the German Reformed church, who, under their assumed authority, forced his way, on the holy Sabbath day, into the pulpit, with intent to lay the foundations for another suit at law. The conspiracy was so far successful as to obtain an order that the church should be closed until the matter in dispute could be adjudicated by the Court. Thus, by the agency of this minister of the German Reformed church, the pious and humble German congregation of United Brethren in Baltimore were for a time, and a long time it proved, locked out of their own house of worship.

The plaintiffs, hoping perhaps that the congregation might be scattered, were in no haste for trial; and, on various pretexts, the cause was delayed from 1842 to 1846, when it finally came up for a hearing before Judge J. C. Legrant. The plaintiffs, and their willing pastor, Mr. Gutelius, aided by the most subtle legal ability, left no means untried to divert the Otterbein property from its proper owners. But they failed. The Court, after



a patient hearing, gave judgment in favor of the defendants.

This second unsuccessful attempt of members of the German Reformed church, to deprive the United Brethren congregation of their house of worship,—a house held dear to them from its intimate association with the rise of the church in the United States, and its most venerable father,—deserves the severest censure.

During the four years through which the case was kept in Court, the congregation, with its devoted pastor, Jacob Erb, kept together as well as they could, and worshiped wherever opportunity offered. Although successful in both suits, yet attorney's fees and other necessary expenses, amounted to about \$3,000.

At length the happy Sabbath came when the pastor and his congregation were again invited by the long silenced bells to assemble in their venerable house of worship. The occasion is well described by a member of the congregation,\* in a letter to the Religious Telescope: "On Wednesday, Nov. 18th," he writes, "we opened the long shut doors of our church once more. The sisters

\* Brother G. H. Pagels.

and some of the brethren, were soon on the spot, cleaning, scouring, and preparing for divine service on the Sabbath. On Sunday morning the long silenced bells began to ring, inviting friend and foe, as in days gone by, to come to the house of the Lord; and, as far as the sound of those bells could be heard, you could see old and young, white and colored, standing in the doors, or looking out of the windows, gazing at the steeple of Otterbein's church. Wherever you met a brother or sister, you could see the tears of gratitude rolling down their cheeks, and hear them giving utterance to their feelings in expressions like these: 'Thank the Lord. The God whom our fathers in Christ worshiped, has turned our captivity; he has inclined his ear, and heard our prayer. He has turned our mourning into joy. Hallelujah!'

"The morning hour was improved by Bro. Erb, from Ps. 50: 14, 15. After the sermon, bishop Russel delivered a short exhortation. I never before witnessed such an occasion. Smiles of joy on every countenance were mingled with tears from every eye. Then each member of the church humbling himself before Him who is mighty to save,

implored the Lord to forgive our enemies, and give them to see that they that fight against God's people, are warring against the holy one of Israel."

Since 1846 the Otterbein congregation has enjoyed peaceable possession of their venerable church; and they have been able to aid liberally in the erection of a house of worship for an English congregation. It is not likely that they will ever again be molested.

The ninth general conference met in Circleville, O., May 12th, 1845. Three of the superintendents, H. Kumler, sen., John Coons, and H. Kumler, jun., were present. The conference districts were represented as follows: *Virginia*, J. J. Glossbrenner, J. Markwood, and J. Bachtel; *Pennsylvania*, J. Russell; *Alleghany*, J. R. Sitman, J. Ritter, and John Rider; *Muskingum*, A. Biddle, J. McGaw, and W. W. Simpkins; *Wabash*, John Hoobler, Josiah Davis, and John Denham; *Scioto*, J. Montgomery, E. Vandemark, and M. Ambrose; *Sandusky*, H. G. Spayth, Geo. Hiskey, and J. Brown; *Miami*, Geo. Bonebrake, John Crider, and F. Whitcom; *Indiana*, D. Bonebrake and J. A. Ball. In all nine conference districts, then comprising



the whole church, were represented by twenty-four delegates. Such of the acts of this conference as are of general interest, will be noticed briefly in their order.

1. It was decided that *the general conference can not change the Confession of Faith*. This decision is based upon the plain letter of the Constitution itself; (Art. II. Sec. 4,) and it is justified by the consideration that the Confession of Faith, together with the Constitution with a restrictive rule, (Art. II. Sec. 4,) have been virtually, if not formally, submitted to the entire membership of the church, and have received their sanction. But while it is a fact that a general conference may not touch a letter of the Confession of Faith, it is also true that two-thirds of the members of the church may alter the Constitution, and also the Confession of Faith. The general conference is not superior to the Confession of Faith or the Constitution. These instruments embody the well settled faith and polity of the church, and the church only can change them. The fundamental principle is here laid down, that *the supreme earthly authority in our church is vested, not in the ministry, but in the whole society*.

2. *Candidates for the ministry must study.* It

was decided that no one shall be admitted into an annual conference, as a candidate for the ministry, who does not apply himself diligently to the study of the doctrine, biography, geography, history, and chronology of the Holy Scriptures. A list of standard authors were named, which the licentiates were directed to read, as aids in their Biblical researches.

3. *The establishment of an institution of learning by the annual conferences was recommended.* See Chapter XXIII., for particulars.

4. *Conferences set off.* East Pennsylvania, Illinois, St. Joseph, and Iowa, were set off, and provision was made for a division of the Indiana, which resulted in the organization, in 1846, of the White River conference.

5. *The Telescope.* It was decided that the Religious Telescope should be issued weekly.

6. *Elections and appointments.* D. Edwards was elected editor of the Religious Telescope; J. Russel, J. J. Glossbrenner, and W. Hanby, bishops; H. G. Spayth, Church Historian; W. Leist, and J. and G. Dresback, Trustees of the Printing Establishment; J. Russel, President; W. Hanby, J. J. Glossbrenner, Vice Presidents; J. Dresback, Treas-

urer, and J. Montgomery, Secretary, of a Missionary Board.

No careful enumeration of the number of members in the church had been made. The number of ministers and circuits, and the increase from 1840 to 1845, are given by Mr. Hanby,\* as follows:—

Conferences.	Preachers.	Circuits.
Pennsylvania, - - - -	83	21
Virginia, - - - -	37	8
Alleghany, - - - -	47	15
Muskingum, - - - -	62	23
Sandusky, - - - -	61	13
Scioto, - - - -	67	20
Miami, - - - -	82	22
Indiana, - - - -	67	19
Wabash, - - - -	75	33
<hr/>		<hr/>
Total for 1845, - - -	581	180
Total for 1840, - - -	387	90
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Increase in 5 years, -	194	90

Here we have an increase of fifty per cent., in five years, in the ministry, and one hundred per cent. in the circuits.

The whole membership of the church in 1845, allowing 200 members to each field of labor, would be 36,000.

\* History of United Brethren in Christ, p. 289.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

EDUCATION—OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY—MOUNT PLEASANT COLLEGE—HARTSVILLE UNIVERSITY—BLANDINSVILLE SEMINARY—WESTERN COLLEGE—LEONI INSTITUTE, ETC., ETC.

At the general conference which met in 1845, the subject of collegiate education was introduced, discussed, and, by a nearly unanimous vote, the following resolutions were passed:

*Resolved*, That proper measures be adopted to establish an institution of learning.

*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the attention of the annual conferences, avoiding, however, irredeemable debts.

This action wisely contemplated the establishment, by the concurrent action of all the annual conferences, of a single institution of learning.

Early in the year following, quite an interest was manifested, in various parts of the church, which, at that period, had no seminary or college under its control. It is not

to be inferred, however, that a common school education was more generally neglected than by other religious denominations, for this was not the case. United Brethren have always appreciated knowledge, encouraged its diffusion, and have not been behind the American people generally, in literary attainments. Prior to 1846, many of the youth of the church were educated in institutions belonging to other denominations; and, by this means, many of the most promising were drawn into other church relations. The propriety and importance of an institution of learning, to be controlled by the church, had been a subject of frequent conversation and discussion; but, owing mainly to the feeble and scattered condition of the church, and to the fact that its resources and its efficient men were nearly all exhausted in the work of evangelization; and, owing somewhat, also, to fears that a college might be perverted to the injury of the church, no movement was made toward the erection of any such institution prior to 1846.

The first action which we find on record, pursuant to the advice of the general conference, was taken by the Miami annual conference, which met at Otterbein Chapel, Darke

county, O., March 3rd, 1846. It was there agreed that at the Miami conference would unite with the conferences in Northern and Central Indiana, in establishing an institution of learning at Bluffton, Wells county, Ind., or at some other suitable point, that might be agreed upon.

To this proposition the St. Joseph conference, which met in Kosciusko county, Ind., in October following, responded favorably, pledging influence and money; and three trustees were elected (the first appointed by our church), to co-operate with others which might be appointed by other conferences. Immediately after the conference adjourned, a spirited article appeared in the Religious Telescope, from E. H. Lamb, of the St. Joseph conference, urging the church to energetic action.

A few years prior to this time, the Methodists had projected a great number of seminaries and colleges, many of which proved miserable failures. One of these, known as "Blendon Young Men's Seminary," was located at Westerville, O., twelve miles north of Columbus. After a fruitless struggle for life, it had submitted to the stern law of necessity; and, at the Scioto conference which



convened in Pickaway county, Oct., 26th, 1846, a delegation from the defunct seminary, appeared with proposals to turn over its effects to the said conference, if the conference would pay a debt against it of about \$1,300. This was regarded as a great bargain; and a committee to whom the matter was referred, unskilled in such enterprises, actually regarded the "proposition as Providential;" and so it might have been, for Providence has ordained that those who acquire their knowledge in the school of experience shall pay well for their tuition. The conference almost as a matter of course, appointed a committee to purchase the property, passed a resolution soliciting neighboring conferences to co-operate in the enterprise, elected a board of trustees, and provided for the appointment a traveling agent to procure funds. Something now was actually done. A school was located, a pecuniary obligation assumed, and henceforth something more than talk was demanded.

In December following, the Trustees appointed by the Scioto conference,—J. Dresback, William Hanby, and Lewis Davis,—met at Circleville, and appointed L. Davis traveling agent, to secure means, and also

enlist the co-operation of other conferences. This was a very fortunate selection, for had not a cool, prudent man, with an unyielding will, been chosen, the probability is that the enterprise would have perished in its infancy.

In January, 1847, the subject of a college was taken up by the Indiana conference, which is located, the reader must remember, in Southern Indiana. A school was resolved upon, and a committee of three was appointed to co-operate with similar committees, of the White River, St. Joseph, and Miami conferences, with a view to the location of a college at Dublin or Washington, Indiana. C. Lynn, L. S. Chittenden, and J. Lopp, constituted the committee.

The following month, Feb. 4th, the Alleghany conference assembled at Mount Pleasant, Pa. This conference had also caught the spirit of the college movement. The subject was called up, and a series of very decided resolutions adopted. An institution of learning, to be located either at Johnstown or Mount Pleasant, was resolved upon, and a committee was appointed to decide between the two places. This committee very wisely determined that it should be at that one of two

points designated by the conference which should, in the respective counties where they were located, secure the largest subscription to the institution. J. Ritter was appointed traveling agent, and it was resolved that any minister of the conference who should exert his influence against him, in his work as an agent, would expose himself to conference censure. Thus was inaugurated the movement which resulted in the location of a college at Mount Pleasant, under the patronage of the Alleghany conference. And thus the movement which began to develop itself in 1846, resulted in the location of two colleges before the close of 1847. The division of sentiment in the West prevented the selection of either Bluffton or Dublin, and the strong combination of western Ohio and Indiana, which might have built up a good college, was dissolved.

In February, 1847, L. Davis appeared at the Sandusky annual conference, in session in Wood county, and asked the co-operation of that conference in the Westerville Seminary. By a small majority, the conference agreed to co-operate—to appoint trustees, and elect a traveling agent for the school. From the Sandusky Mr. Davis went to the Mus-



kingum conference, in session in Stark Co., where he was less successful. After a warm debate, the conference voted down the proposition for co-operation.

The two seminaries were now fairly before the people, and in April and May the agent of the Westerville school was able to report, in subscriptions and donations, a little more than one thousand dollars; while the agent of Mount Pleasant reported nearly three thousand dollars, in addition to which he had the "promise of five hundred dollars from the good old German Mennonists."

On the 26th of April the trustees of the western school met at Westerville, and, among other things, decided that the institution should be known as "OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY OF OHIO." They also employed W. R. Griffith, a graduate of Asbury University, as principal, and made provisions for opening the school.

During the year or two which followed, the mind of the church was very much occupied with the college question. It was introduced into nearly all the annual conferences, and the columns of the Religious Telescope, the English organ of the church, were crowded with articles upon the question, from the ablest

and most influential men in the church. No considerable number opposed education, or colleges; yet there were many who thought the movement premature; others, who, while they favored colleges, desired one of a particular character; and a few conscientious men, while favoring human learning, thought colleges under the patronage of the church would gradually draw it away from the simplicity and power of evangelical religion. As this is a discussion which will probably never be revived in our church, it may be interesting to quote a few passages from some of the writers who took a leading part in it.

As representing the fathers of the Otterbein period, we quote a few passages from H. G. Spayth.\* "Now mark me, literary, scientific, and religious attainments, we as a church and people have always admired, honored, and respected. \* \* Had our fathers and brethren believed it to be their duty to build up seminaries of learning, it could have been done, as well as other things; but they confessed that their call was emphatically to the weightier matter, that of winning souls. As to the ministry, they sought not so much to fill the sacred stand with men of polished eloquence,

\* Telescope, Vol. VI., 336, 337.

as with men of power, of love, and of sound minds; men called of God as was Aaron. They had also learned these two lessons. 1. That learning is not the *primary*, but the *secondary* means, or help, in the gospel ministry. 2. That the tree of knowledge is not the tree of life."

On the 31st of March a communication appeared in the organ of the church, over the signature of H. Kumler, which expressed the views of a very large class, especially of the German portion of the church. He did not object to institutions of learning, but he wished to establish such an institution as would be free from some of the confessedly great evils which attach to the popular colleges.

"Can not," said Mr. K., "institutions of learning be conducted without being made a curse to many, as we see they are? In many instances students, while at college, lay the foundations of both their physical and moral ruin. They too often return from college, pale, disinclined to labor, and often profligate in their habits. \* \* So far as I can learn, we of the Miami conference will go in favor of an institution in which manual labor and worldly economy are taught as well



as letters and morality. No student to be admitted who is able, physically, to perform labor, and will not. \* \* Out of such an institution we might expect the rich and the poor to come with the best intellectual stock, capable of enduring the hardships common to man in this rough world. \* \* For such an institution our plain and honest people will go; for they want their children educated, but not at the sacrifice of their health, habits of industry, and immortal souls."

John Russel advocated similar views with much force and earnestness. "A seminary of learning among the United Brethren in Christ," said he, "to which labor is not appended, will not suit the habits of our people, nor their views." He urged the whole church to unite in the erection of one great manual labor college, to which he offered a liberal contribution.

Such were the views of the representative men who were regarded as least friendly to the educational movement. They did not oppose learning, much less institutions of learning; but their objections were leveled against the manifest evils of collegiate life, and they earnestly advocated a system by which those

evils might, in their judgment, be obviated; and their arguments were not without weight.

In May, 1847, the trustees of Otterbein University issued a circular, in which they replied to some random accusations, and defined the objects of the institution. Some had called the school a "priest-factory." To this fling they replied: "Without admitting, by any means, that the acquired abilities of our ministry are beyond, or even up to what the important station demands, against this comment upon our motives, we now enter the most solemn protest. We have, from the beginning, in public and in private, disavowed any intention of the kind. \* \* We ask, who ever heard any of our fathers speak against high schools, as such? But they considered it an evil of great magnitude to educate men in these schools for the ministry, and send them out to preach without religion. *So we say with all our hearts.* If God should call a man from the plow, let him go. If from the mechanic's shop, let him go. If from any of the high schools of the land, let him likewise go, and *go immediately.* This sentiment we think our venerated fathers held no more sacred than we do. \* \* But who will vouch that Otterbein University will

not, at some future day, become a 'priest-factory?' We answer, this is asking too much. All any reasonable man can ask, is, that we try, by the grace of God, to preserve the institution from such apostasy." In relation to the manual labor system, they only said: "This institution may, at some day not very remote, have connected with it the manual labor system. This will depend, however, upon our success in raising the funds."\*

Thus was our educational movement inaugurated thirteen years ago. And what has been its history since? To trace it minutely and in detail, is beyond our province. A few facts must suffice.

The Otterbein University was opened for the reception of students in September, 1847; and a good school has been sustained ever since. Four respectable classes have been graduated. In 1847 the Muskingum, and in 1853 the Miami conference, voted to co-operate.

The Mount Pleasant college, located in one of the most beautiful regions in the world, kept up a respectable school for a number of years, and secured the co-operation of all the conferences east of Ohio. At length,

\* Circular prepared by L. Davis and W. Hanby.



however, a troublesome, though not large, debt began to press upon it, and in 1858 its interests, assets and debts, were transferred to Otterbein University.

The Indiana conferences, failing to unite on a central location, a quarterly conference of Newbern circuit, held in 1849, made arrangements to open a school at Hartsville, a small village in Bartholomew Co., Ind., not far from the place where the first United Brethren societies in the state were planted. The Indiana annual conference of the same year, endorsed the action of the quarterly conference, and took what has since been named the HARTSVILLE UNIVERSITY, under its patronage and control. Subsequently the co-operation of the White River conference was secured, and, at a later period, of the other Indiana conferences; but the co-operation of the Wabash and St. Joseph conferences has only been nominal. In the retired village of Hartsville, a good school has been sustained since 1849. Prudence and perseverance have marked the action of the trustees and teachers. No burthensome debt has been created; and now, on a site which overlooks a picturesque section of Indiana, a large and convenient college edifice is being erected.

In 1853, a seminary of very moderate pretensions was established at Blandinsville, McDonough Co., Illinois, under the joint patronage of the Illinois and Rock River conferences, called BLANDINSVILLE SEMINARY. Little progress has been made, yet, under the fostering care of the Illinois conference (the Rock River having united its interests with Western), a good school has been sustained. An academy under Christian control may, in an humble and quiet way, accomplish an excellent work.

At the session of the Iowa conference, in 1855, a board of trustees was appointed, consisting of S. Weaver, M. G. Miller, J. Miller, D. Runkle, and J. Neidig, to locate an institution of learning at a place convenient for the whole church in Iowa. The proposed institution was to be called WESTERN COLLEGE; and the co-operation of the Des Moines conference was solicited. At the next session of the Des Moines conference, a hearty co-operation was agreed upon, and trustees were, accordingly, appointed. In December, 1855, it was decided that the school should be located on section 34, Putnam township, Linn Co., providing a local donation of \$7000 be made. The required donation was secured.

The site selected, on the virgin prairie, is one of the most delightful in Iowa. A building was soon erected; and, on the first day of January, 1857, the school was opened. The history of the college since 1857 has been similar to that of most young institutions of the west. A good school has been sustained; labor and study have been quite successfully united; and the co-operation of nearly all the western and north-western conferences has been obtained. With prudent and energetic management the Western College promises to be a success.

In 1859, the Michigan Union College, located at Leoni, Jackson Co., Michigan, was transferred from the Michigan conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, to the Michigan conference of the United Brethren in Christ. Soon after the transfer was made, a school, known as the MICHIGAN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, was opened by the United Brethren, which has been quite well sustained. The location, on the Michigan Central Railroad, between Jackson and Detroit, is as pleasant as could be desired. The property transferred was valued, for school purposes, at \$10,000.

Other schools have been projected—one in



Kansas and one in Oregon for example,—but it is too soon to speak of them in this volume. Indeed, our seminaries and colleges are all in their infancy; and it will require many years of labor to place them upon a firm financial basis. The fact, however, should not be overlooked, that the usefulness of colleges can not be determined by their financial strength or circumstances; and that the highest degree of efficiency is sometimes attained amid the greatest pecuniary straits. Ample endowments do not always secure the best class of students, nor the most competent professors.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MISSIONARY MOVEMENT—ORGANIZATION  
AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOME, FRONTIER,  
AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

It is a pleasing task to trace the rise of the missionary movement in our church, which, although of recent origin, has already carried the healthful waters of life to thousands of thirsty souls.

Our early German ministers were, in the fullest sense of the word, home missionaries; and better models of genuine home evangelists than some of them were, can not be found. And as soon as our German societies had obtained sufficient solidity, and ability to aid the cause outside of the German communities, operations were commenced among the English. And thus the home missionary enterprise, on a more extensive field, was inaugurated about the year 1818; and it was prosecuted with no little energy and liberality. From 1820 to 1840, the German portion of the church contributed liberally and constantly,

both means and men, to carry forward the home missionary work among the English people.

The west was debtor to the east for the greater number of its pioneer members and ministers; and also for frequent, and sometimes liberal, material aid. It must not be supposed that the fathers were destitute of the missionary spirit. Far from it. They responded to the calls made upon them, and responded liberally.

At the conference which convened at Valentine Doub's, Frederick Co., Md., in 1819, Abraham Mayer paid over to the conference \$50 in cash, as a donation from ELIZABETH SNYDER, which she desired should be distributed among the "poor itinerant preachers in the state of Ohio." Sister Snyder's name should ever be held dear by the Brethren in the west, for the generous interest which she manifested in their behalf at that early period. At the same time the sum of \$66 24 cents was paid over by the conference to the bishops, to be by them distributed among the itinerants in Ohio,—making in all \$116 24 cents of missionary aid.

A year or two later, Mr. Newcomer visited a venerable father in Israel, named



Joseph Witmer, with whom he conversed about the traveling preachers in the western country. "I read to him," says the good bishop, "several letters which I had received from the state of Ohio. This moved him to pity and compassion; and he gave me \$80 00, in cash, which he directed me to distribute among those who most needed assistance." This speaks well for Joseph Witmer.

Between 1838 and 1840, nearly all the conferences organized home missionary societies, by which means they were able to prosecute the work of home evangelization more energetically and systematically. Thus home missionary societies were formed in Muskingum and Scioto conferences in 1838; in Virginia in 1839; and in Alleghany in 1840. At the general conference which met in 1841, the subject of missions at home and in foreign lands was discussed, and a parent board of missions, as already noticed, was appointed. For some reason this board remained entirely inactive, for four years; and at the general conference of 1845 it was re-elected. Four years more of total inaction was followed by another re-election in 1849.

But the time, the set time, for a united movement of the whole church, under the

lead of a central board, was drawing near. The Lord was stirring up the people, and they could not rest. Isolated conference action, in the home field, no longer answered the wishes and the expectations of the church. Soon after the Oregon territory was opened for settlement, some United Brethren families emigrated thither, and, in letters to the Religious Telescope, pleaded with the church to send them spiritual instructors. These calls touched many hearts, and moved some to action; and among the number T. J. Conner, of the White River conference. Mr. C. suggested, through the organ of the church, the propriety of sending to the Pacific one or two missionaries, in company with a colony of laymen, who might desire to settle in the new territory. This suggestion was well received. Quite a number of families volunteered to emigrate; the board of missions, first elected in 1841, was called together to hold its first meeting; and in the spring of 1853 two missionaries, T. J. Conner and J. Kenoyer, three local preachers, and twenty-nine lay-members, set out overland for Oregon. This movement, so wise and timely in itself, exerted an excellent reflex influence upon the church.

In the autumn following the movement of the colony to Oregon, at a meeting of the Sandusky annual conference, a profound interest in the missionary cause was developed; and a committee, of which J. C. Bright was chairman, presented a report, in substance as follows:—1. That the time has fully come when the United Brethren Church should unite her whole strength in a missionary society, which shall include not only the home, but the frontier and foreign fields in the sphere of its labors. 2. That the Sandusky conference organize itself into a branch missionary society, with the prayer that the general conference may form a general society, of which each conference may be a branch. 3. That the payment of one dollar shall constitute a person a member of the society for one year; ten dollars, a life member; and fifty dollars, a life director. 4. That our brethren be entreated to exercise the most prayerful thought and careful inquiry into the wants of the nominally Christian, and, especially, heathen world, that their views may be enlarged in regard to the magnitude of the work devolving upon the Christian church, in fulfilling the commission given by our Savior on the Mount, just before his ascension. 5. That



whereas the members of the Sandusky annual conference have formed themselves into a foreign missionary society, our delegates to the ensuing general conference are instructed to pray said conference to take such measures as will create an effective foreign missionary society, in order to effect a concentrated activity throughout the whole church, so that we may confidently look forward to the time, not distant, when the church of the United Brethren in Christ shall have efficient missionaries in foreign lands.

This report was supported by stirring addresses from the presiding bishop, D. Edwards, H. G. Spayth, and others, and adopted without a dissenting vote; after which a subscription was presented, and more than \$700 were immediately pledged to the society's funds. The conference adjourned in a thoroughly awakened missionary spirit. The other conferences, which met prior to the general conference, manifested a similar spirit; and when the general conference convened in Miltonville, in May, 1853, the whole church was ripe for a general missionary movement. After a pretty thorough discussion of the question, the plan outlined in the action of the Sandusky conference was adopted with

entire unanimity. A general missionary society was organized, or to say the same thing in a plainer way, the United Brethren church was organized into a missionary society. The society is known as the "Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society of the United Brethren in Christ." Of this society J. J. Glossbrenner, senior bishop of the church, was elected President; H. Kumler, L. Davis, and D. Edwards, Vice-presidents; J. C. Bright, Corresponding Secretary; J. Kemp, jr., Treasurer; William Longstreet, D. Shuck, T. N. Sowers, J. Dodds and D. B. Crouse, Managers.

The Corresponding Secretary devoted himself to the cause with a zeal and energy which made a deep impression upon the mind of the church. Few could hear his impassioned discourses without being moved. At some public meetings \$1000, and at others \$2000 were secured; and this was not in wealthy city churches, but in small, and comparatively poor congregations. During the first year of the society's operations, \$7,541 66 in cash were paid over for missions, \$3,450 50 of which were for frontier and foreign missions exclusively. In addition to this the general secretary reported that the probable amount,

in notes and subscriptions, in the various conferences, was not less than \$15,000.

At a special meeting of the Board during the year, a mission was located in Africa, and another in Canada. At the annual meeting, a very excellent spirit prevailed. The resolutions adopted express the spirit which animated the Board and the church, at the outset of this movement.

I. Resolved, That in view of the remarkable success of our missionary agent in securing funds, and also in view of the most cordial and efficient action and operation of the different annual conferences throughout the church in promoting the missionary work, we are called upon by the great Head of the church to render thanks to the God of missions, and to consecrate ourselves anew to his service.

II. Resolved, That this missionary board will make it a primary object to give the gospel of Christ to all men in all countries in its unmixed and original purity, wholly uncorrupted by the popular sins of the age; such as Slavery, Secret Oath-bound Societies, Intemperance and Caste.

III. Resolved, That we are more than ever convinced of the obligation resting upon us as ministers of Him who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and also as members of the Christian Church in general, to give the gospel, the whole gospel, to the heathen abroad as well as to our fellow countrymen at home.

IV. Resolved, That we will continue to conjure our Christian brethren by all their love of that most lovely of Beings, who gave his life for the redemption of the whole human race; by all their deep sympathy for down-trodden and degraded humanity; and by every throb of the heart that beats in the direction of the good and the brave, to listen to the voice of lamentation and woe coming up from the whole continent of Africa.

V. Resolved, That in the propagation of Christianity both at home and in heathen countries, we regard the law of God as paramount to all human compacts, and as the only foundation of moral obligation.



Hence no human law can be binding upon the conscience, if it clearly comes in conflict with the law of God.

VI. Resolved, That in the opinion of this Board one of the first duties of the missionary after arriving in a heathen country, is to apply his mind to acquire a knowledge of the language or dialect of the natives, so that he may be able, as soon as possible, to speak to the people in their own tongue and without an interpreter.

VII. Resolved, That we place but little confidence in the building up of missionary schools for the purpose of teaching the heathen a foreign language and a foreign literature; yet we advise our missionaries, as soon as practicable, to erect schools for the purpose of teaching the heathen a more perfect knowledge of their own language, and the ordinary sciences pertaining to civilized life; and also by the aid of their schools let the Scriptures be given to the heathen in the language wherein they were born, as soon as possible.

VIII. Resolved, That we advise all the missionaries who may go to heathen countries under the direction of this Board, to carry out the itinerant system, as recognized in our book of discipline, so far as practicable, under the circumstances.

IX. Resolved, That while we believe it will be many years before our missions in heathen countries become self-supporting, yet we will labor to produce this result as soon as possible.

X. Resolved, That while we appreciate the power and influence of wealth, learning and genius, as instruments in the great work of converting the heathen to Christ, yet we believe that no amount of human learning and wealth, no array of talents and genius, can supply the place of an humble reliance on God, and a faithful adherence to the principles of Christianity.

XI. Resolved, That we do most earnestly and affectionately request all our ministers and members of the church to make it a regular business to pray for the success of missionaries; and particularly for those of our dear brethren who may be enduring the hardships and privations incident to a missionary life in an uncivilized country."

These resolutions breathe the right spirit, and the church may do well to recur to them frequently in years to come. Oftentimes, in the vigor and spirituality of the early life of a Christian enterprise, the sight is clearer,

and the faith stronger and more evangelical, than in maturer years, when there is more wealth, policy, routine, worldly wisdom and worldly conformity.

At this meeting W. J. Shuey was appointed to the African mission, and S. S. Snyder to Kansas. In July of the same year, Israel Sloane was appointed to the Canada mission; and in November, D. C. Kumler, and D. K. Flickinger were added to the African force. The three brethren, Shuey, Kumler and Flickinger, sailed from New York, January 23rd, 1856, and reached Africa, February 28th, 1856.

Thus was the missionary enterprise inaugurated among us. Let us now take a summary view of its progress during the first eight years of its operations. The corresponding secretary, Mr. Bright, in his quadrennial report, says:—

“The cordial manner in which the missionary cause has been received by every annual conference that I have visited, and by the churches in the various portions of our Zion, and the intelligent and lively interest manifested, deserve especial and grateful acknowledgments. The whole church has been so nearly a unit, in this cause, and has shown such a readiness to act fully up to the light

and opportunity afforded, that we may, with the increasing light and facilities, reasonably hope that the time is near when our missionary resources will be fully developed, and successfully employed at home and abroad; and when, eye to eye, and shoulder to shoulder, with God's people of every name, we shall push on the conquests of the Cross until the whole world shall rejoicingly submit to the peaceful reign of our Redeemer and Lord. During the last four years an extensive work has been accomplished in the home field; portions of the frontier field have been surveyed, and cultivation has been commenced; and the foreign field has been visited,—a stake has been planted, and the measuring line has been stretched upon it.

“Four years since we had no organization in Oregon; now we have a small but flourishing annual conference, and a fine prospect for the growth of the church both in Oregon and Washington territories.

“In Kansas our prospects are good. The political sky is cloudy, but freedom must, in the end, prevail. We have but to follow the openings of Providence, to win many souls in Kansas.

“The Missouri mission-conference has been



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able to add but little to its strength. It is situated in the midst of the border conflict, and is a light in a dark place.

"Our mission in Canada is very prosperous. The membership has been nearly doubled during the past year, and now reaches near 400.

"Nebraska, Minnesota, and Tennessee, are all promising missions. The borders of the Michigan and German mission-conferences have been enlarged. The Michigan conference has already 19 preachers, and a membership of about 1000. The German has 25 preachers, and a membership of 1200.

"Every annual conference in the church has increased in membership, and some have more than doubled their numbers."

The entire expenditure for missions during the four years, for the frontier and foreign work, was \$21,580 00, distributed as follows:—

Africa,.....	\$5,500 00
Oregon,.....	3,425 00
Kansas,.....	2,555 00
Missouri,.....	1,750 00
German conference.....	2,950 00
Michigan Mission-conference,.....	1,200 00
Minnesota,.....	400 00
Canada,.....	2,310 00
Nebraska,.....	1,500 00

Total,.....\$21,580 00

The expenditures for the home work, including the amounts raised for the support of missionaries on the missions amounted to.....\$60,101 21

Making a total expenditure for the four years of.....\$81,681 21

In 1857, D. K. Flickinger, who had just returned from Africa in consequence of failing health, was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Society; and he devoted himself to the duties of his office with all the ardor which actual experience in the foreign work is calculated to inspire. Large success attended his labors, as a soliciting agent; but a long and painful illness seemed to render his resignation necessary, a few months after the general conference. He was succeeded by Mr. Bright, his predecessor in the office, who, after nearly a year's devotion to the cause he loved so well, was in turn compelled, on account of completely-prostrated health, to resign. By this time Mr. Flickinger had so far recovered from the effects of the African climate, as to be able to resume his office; and he has since devoted himself to its duties with marked ability and success. To him, in connection with the Treasurer, Mr. J. Kemp, jr., belongs the credit of carrying the Society creditably through one of the most embarrassing financial periods which this country has ever known; and not only has the credit of the Society been sustained, but the cause has been pushed forward successfully. From the second quadrennial report.

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of the Society's operations we learn that during the four years ending in 1861, there were paid toward the support of the

Sherbro mission, West Africa.....	\$7,349 67
Canada mission-conference.....	3,550 00
Michigan " " .....	500 00
Wisconsin " " .....	9,000 00
Minnesota " " .....	2,020 00
Nebraska " " .....	1,755 00
Kansas " " .....	2,750 00
Missouri " " .....	1,350 00
Tennessee " " .....	731 25
Parkersburg " " .....	873 03
German " " .....	3,700 00
California " " .....	50 00
Oregon " " .....	3,293 00

Total paid by the board for frontier and foreign work, \$28,822 04

During the same period there was paid for the support of missions, on the frontiers, by the missions themselves, excluding California..... 16,416 40

Paid for the support of home missions in the various self-sustaining conferences during the same period. 81,824 91

Total for home, frontier, and foreign missions.....\$127,063 35

These footings, when compared with the footings of Mr. Bright's report for the term ending in 1857, show an increase in the aggregate contributions of \$45,382 14.

The second quadrennial report shows a debt of only \$5,166 65. Against this the Society has the following availables:

Lands in Illinois, donated by J. C. BRIGHT, 120 acres, valued at.....	\$ 1,500 00
Lands in Illinois, bequeathed by W. H. BROWN, valued at	12,000 00
Notes in the hands of branch treasurers.....	10,300 00

Total assets.....\$22,800 00

Assets over debt.....\$17,633 44

Such is an outline history of the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society, during the first eight years of its operations.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FRONTIER MISSION WORK—NEW CONFERENCES—OREGON, MICHIGAN, CANADA, WISCONSIN, MISSOURI, KANSAS, MINNESOTA, GERMAN, PARKERSBURG—MISSIONS—CALIFORNIA, TENNESSEE, AND NEW ENGLAND.

It has been already stated that in the spring of 1853 T. J. Conner and J. Kenoyer, accompanied by J. B. Lichtenthaler, M. M. Crow, R. Price, and twenty-nine laymembers, left the States for OREGON, by the overland route. The journey across the plains and mountains was accomplished in about five months. The whole company reached their destination except David Mason, a beloved father in Israel, who died on the way, in good hope of a home in heaven. His remains rest at "Barlow's Gate," near the eastern base of the Cascade mountains. Soon after the colony arrived in Oregon, a class was organized in Benton Co., and on the 20th of May, 1854, the first quarterly conference was held. Dividing the Willamette valley

into two missions, Mr. Conner commenced his work upon the southern, and Mr. Kenoyer upon the northern division. Their labors were abundantly blessed.

The general conference of 1853 recognized Oregon territory as a mission-conference district, and all the ministers in the territory assembled in annual conference on the 30th day of May, 1855. The annual conference was composed of the ministers already named, and P. C. Parker. T. J. Conner, to whom the superintendence of the mission had been committed by the board, was elected bishop *pro tem*. At the time of the organization of the conference, the missionaries had been laboring in the territory eighteen months; during which time they had introduced the church into the counties of Yam Hill, Polk, Marion, Benton, Linn, Lane, and Umpqua. The two missionaries were much aided by the local ministers.

The first annual conference divided the work into five fields of labor, the whole constituting one presiding elder's district. Such, in brief, is a history of the establishment of the United Brethren Church in Oregon. Of the progress of the work, and of many pleasing and exciting incidents connected with it, no-

tice can not be taken in this volume. Suffice it to say that the foundations of the church were laid upon the solid rock; that the workmen have been prudent, persevering, and true; and that the progress of the cause has been constant and healthful. The statistics of the conference for 1861 show eleven traveling and seven local ministers, and five hundred and seventy-three members.

Prior to 1840, some societies of United Brethren were formed in Lenewee Co., Michigan, by the Sandusky conference, and in Berrien Co., by the St. Joseph,—these counties lying adjacent to circuits and missions in Ohio and Indiana,—but up to the year 1848, no well-directed effort had been made to establish the church in the interior of the state. Prior to this time, United Brethren missionaries had found their way far beyond the Mississippi, and were already looking to Oregon as a field soon to be occupied. The reason why Michigan and other northern states, and Canada, were passed by so long, is found in the fact that United Brethren from the older sections of the church usually followed the tide of emigration which flowed through Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. Michigan being largely settled by New York and New Eng-



land people, there were, of course, few United Brethren ministers among the emigrants, to lift up the standard, or members to call for missionaries.

In 1848 the presiding elder, who traveled the western district of Sandusky conference, encouraged a zealous young preacher to open a mission in Livingston and adjoining counties; and at the session of the Sandusky conference for 1849, a mission district, consisting of four missions, was organized. The district was traveled by Stephen Lee. The work progressed so rapidly, under the supervision of the Sandusky conference, that, in 1853, the general conference constituted the state of Michigan (excepting the portion occupied by the St. Joseph conference) a mission conference.

The first session of this conference was held near Eaton Rapids, in October, 1854. Bishop Davis presided, and the following ministers were in attendance: J. Lawrence, J. Nixon, A. Bowser, J. Martin, G. C. Fox, H. Rathbun, W. S. Titus, S. Lee, C. B. Waldo, W. L. Kennard, and G. W. Miller. The preachers were stationed as follows:—  
*Michigan District:* J. Dixon, P. E.; Lansing, A. Bowser; Pine Lake, W. L. Kennard;

Grand River, G. C. Fox; Barry, A. Barnum; Eaton, H. Rathbun; Ingham, J. Garber; Jackson, G. W. Miller; Adrian, W. S. Titus; Raisin, J. Martin; Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, and Kent missions to be supplied.

At the end of four years of self-denying labor, the young conference was placed on the list of self-supporting conferences; and in 1860 it numbered twenty-six itinerant and eleven local ministers, and sixteen hundred and twenty-two members; and it had under its control, at Leoni, a promising seminary of learning.

Some societies were formed in CANADA WEST, by Jacob Erb, a quarter of a century ago; but they were neglected, and, as a consequence, were disbanded, although some excellent members, gathered into the fold by Mr. Erb, remain unto this day. In 1853 the Sandusky conference made a small appropriation toward the support of a mission in Canada; and the following year Mr. Erb made a visit to the Province to inquire into the expediency of re-establishing a mission. On his return he reported favorably of the enterprise, whereupon the board of missions sent over Israel Sloane, of the Scioto conference, as a missionary. Other laborers from

the United States followed, and some were raised up in the Province. So well did the cause advance that in 1856 bishop Glossbrenner visited the mission, and organized an annual conference, called the Canada Mission-conference. The first session of this new conference was held at Sheffield. Five missions were recognized and supplied, and the whole field was placed under the supervision of Mr. Sloane, as presiding elder. The growth of the work has been healthful; and an excellent class of ministers has been raised up in the Province. In 1861 the conference numbered sixteen ministers, and seven hundred and three members. An open door has been placed before the United Brethren in Canada.

The United Brethren church in Wisconsin was established by missionaries from Illinois; prominent, and most beloved among whom was James Davis. The first society in the state was organized by Mr. Davis, at father Johnson's, not far from Rutland, in Dane Co. The blessing of God upon the indefatigable labors of the missionaries from Illinois resulted in the establishment of many good societies in the southern counties of the state. In 1857 the general conference set off the work in Wisconsin, constituting it a



mission-conference. This was a wise measure; and it has told very favorably upon the progress of the cause. The first Wisconsin conference met at Rutland, Dane Co., in 1858. Bishop Davis presided. The work was divided into two districts, comprising sixteen missions and four circuits, which were supplied as follows:

*East District*:—G. G. Nickey, P. E.; Rutland, S. C. Zuck; Union, S. Sutton; Monroe, J. W. Reed; Sun Prairie, W. Haskins; Whitewater, E. S. Bunce; Fond du lac, J. Nichols; Plymouth, S. Knox.

*West District*:—S. L. Eldred, P. E.; Viroqua, F. Outcalt; Crawford, R. Powell; Forest, N. Smith; Richland, G. Kite; Honey Creek, W. W. Simpkins and B. Howard; Lemmonware, D. Harrington; Blakes Prairie, E. W. Canfield; Blue River, J. Payne; Otter Creek, J. B. L. Winter; Rushacre, R. Crozier. Several missions were left to be supplied with laborers by the presiding elders.

The Lord went with the missionaries, and at the annual conference for 1860 they reported: ministers, local, eight; traveling, thirty-one; fields of labor, thirty-two; members, eighteen hundred and eighty-five. At the request of this vigorous young conference, the general conference of 1861 divided Wisconsin into two conferences. The southern portion, retaining the old name, was made a self-sustaining conference; the northern, called Fox River, was made a mission-conference.

Efforts were made in 1853 to establish the United Brethren church in south-western MISSOURI. Henry Kumler, jun., was sent

out, early in that year, as a pioneer missionary; and he was followed by J. Terrel. Annual conferences were held, bishop Edwards presiding, from 1854 to 1858; but soon after the work had been so well begun, the great struggle between freedom and slavery for the territory of Kansas, was commenced. The United Brethren missions were in the famous "Border," and during the years of intense excitement which followed, our infant societies made little or no progress.

The Des Moines conference inaugurated a more successful missionary movement, under more favorable auspices, in the northern part of the state; and in 1858 the ministers of that conference, who had been laboring in Missouri, assembled in annual conference at Atlanta, in Macon Co. Bishop Edwards presided. The fields of labor were named and supplied at this conference as follows: Eagleville, P. Shanklin; Putnam, J. Osborn and J. Mayfield; Chariton, G. H. Busby; St. Francisville, J. H. McVay; Newport, T. Perkins; Atlanta, W. H. Burns; Bible Grove, J. T. Timmons; St. Aubert, S. Coblentz. Two missions, the Nodaway and Marrowbone, were to be supplied by the presiding elder, Moses Michael. The growth of this conference, since

its re-organization, has been highly encouraging. The missionaries have devoted themselves to the cause with commendable zeal; and, at the conference in 1860, were able to report 1001 members in society, not including any in the south-western part of the state.

Soon after KANSAS was opened for settlement, the missionaries of the United Brethren church were sent into the territory; and through the severe and protracted struggle between freedom and slavery,—a struggle which will fill a large space in the history of our country,—they were among the most efficient evangelists. The first missionaries sent out were S. S. Snyder, of Alleghany conference, and W. A. Cardwell, of Indiana. The first annual conference convened at Prairie City, Douglas Co., in 1857, bishop Edwards presiding. The fields of labor were supplied as follows:

*Kansas district:* S. S. Snyder, P. E.; Tecumseh mission, W. A. Cardwell; Big Springs, A. M. Thornton; Lawrence, S. Kretzinger; Prairie City, J. S. Gingerich; Upper Neosho, G. Perkins; Lower Neosho, N. Bixler; Fort Scott, J. Terrel; Osawattamie, W. Huffman. Amid all the difficulties arising from the struggle for freedom, and from the late fam-



ine, the church has been steadily gaining ground; and in 1860 was able to report nine hundred and twenty-eight members in society.

In the month of October, 1856, J. W. Fulkerson, formerly of the Virginia conference, commenced his labors, as a missionary of the United Brethren board, in MINNESOTA. In August of the following year Edmund Clow, of the Rock River conference, received a commission to labor in the same field. So well was the work commenced, that the general conference of 1857 recognized Minnesota as a mission-conference district; and the first session of the Minnesota conference was held at Marion, Olmstead Co., in August, 1857. Bishop Davis presided. There were present, besides the ministers already named, J. Haney, who had been sent out by the board, from the Virginia conference; and J. Merrill, formerly of the Sandusky conference. At the session of this new conference (which lies almost wholly north of the United Brethren line of emigration), for 1860, nine itinerant preachers, and four hundred and ninety-one members, were reported.

In 1835, fathers Mechlin and Cramer, of the Scioto conference, by invitation of Mr. Hanby, established an appointment in a large

GERMAN settlement in south-eastern Ohio, which resulted in the organization of a good society, composed wholly of European Germans. This was the germ of a work exclusively German, which has since been developed into two German conference districts. Up to 1853 the German preachers in the west, raised up among the European Germans, were received into the English conferences; but at the general conference of that year an exclusively GERMAN CONFERENCE was formed, to embrace Ohio and the west generally. This mission-conference held its first session in 1853; and, after eight years of successful labor, a self-supporting German conference was constituted in Ohio, and a German mission-conference formed in Indiana and the north-west. There were in the German conference, at its session in 1860, fifteen traveling preachers, and twelve hundred and eighteen members.

The PARKERSBURG conference was set off from the Virginia conference in 1857. It occupies that portion of Virginia which lies west of the mountains. With but trifling assistance from the board of missions, its success has been all that could be desired. It numbered, at its last annual session, six-

teen traveling preachers, and twenty-two hundred and ten members.

In 1858 Israel Sloane, who had labored with such marked success as a pioneer in Canada, volunteered to open a mission in CALIFORNIA. Trusting wholly to the generosity of the people among whom he was to labor, and to his own means, for support, he entered upon the work, and labored with so much success, that, in 1861 the general conference recognized California as a mission-conference district. Mr. Sloane reported recently, in the new work, three or four fields of labor, all of which were supplied, and a number of good societies. The spirit of enterprise which has characterized Mr. S. in the establishment of this mission, is worthy of all praise.

In 1856 John Reubush, of the Virginia conference, was sent into eastern Tennessee, to open a mission. He was kindly received by the people, and his labors were crowned by the conversion of many souls. He succeeded in forming a good circuit, and erecting one or more houses of worship, when the war for the Union rendered a suspension of his labors necessary.

In 1857 the Sandusky conference projected



a mission in New England. S. Lindsay and L. Moore were the first missionaries employed in this work. They commenced their labors in Massachusetts. The Lord went with them, and with those subsequently sent; and so well was the work sustained, that in 1861 a Massachusetts mission-conference was formed. Prior to the establishment of the conference, the New England mission was supported and supplied with laborers wholly by the Sandusky conference.

We have only glanced at the rapidly-expanding frontier field, a minute history of which would fill a volume; but we have seen sufficient to convince us that the last decade has been a period of very successful frontier missionary work in the United Brethren church.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE LATE QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCES—WATER BAPTISM—DEPRAVITY QUESTION—IMPEACHMENT CASE—STATE OF THE CHURCH.

OF the late general conferences,—tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth,—a detailed notice can not be given in this volume. Aside from the ordinary routine of work, devolving upon the chief ecclesiastical assembly of a church, little was done by the general conference of 1849.\* One act, however,

\* The conference districts were represented as follows: *Pennsylvania*, J. Erb, G. Miller, and J. Fohl; *East Pennsylvania*, O. Pefley, J. Roop, and D. Gingerich; *Virginia*, H. Burtner, J. Bechtel, and J. Markwood; *Alleghany*, J. B. Resler, J. R. Sitman, W. Beighel; *Muskingum*, S. C. Steward, A. S. Wade, and J. Todd; *Scioto*, J. Montgomery, D. Edwards, and M. Ambrose; *Sandusky*, A. Spracklin, H. G. Spayth, and J. C. Bright; *Miami*, W. R. Rhinehart, W. Davis, H. Kumler, jr.; *Indiana*, H. Bonebrake, L. S. Chittenden, J. Lopp; *Illinois*, J. Terrel; *Wabash*, J. Hoobler, J. P. Shuey, and J. Griffith; *White River*, D. Stover, W. W. Richardson, C. W. Witt; *St. Joseph*, J. Thomas, J. M. Hershey, E. and H. Lamb.

*Elections.* W. Hanby, Editor of *Religious Telescope*; D. Strickler, Editor of "Busy Martha"; N. Altman, Publishing Agent; J. J. Glossbrenner, J. Erb, and D. Edwards, bishops; the Trustees of the Printing Establishment were re-elected.

deserves a little attention. The rule on secret societies was changed, with a view to make it more effective. Prior to 1849 some new secret orders had arisen, and among them the Sons of Temperance, an order which, by its devotion to the noblest of causes, appealed with almost resistless effect to the popular heart; and yet, unfortunately for the great cause in which it was enlisted, the hateful serpent of secrecy was coiled up in its very heart. Many of the United Brethren in Christ were placed in a strait. They did not wish to give any countenance to the defenseless principles upon which secret combinations are founded, nor, on the other hand, to oppose, or even *appear* to oppose the blessed cause of temperance; and as the rule in the discipline specified Freemasonry only, a few of them overlooking the Constitution which prohibits connection with any and every secret combination, joined the new order, and claimed that in so doing they violated no rule of discipline. The subject came before the general conference, was thoroughly discussed, and with but two dissenting votes the following new chapter was inserted in the Discipline, in the place of the old chapter adopted in 1829:\*

\* See page 191.



"Freemasonry, in every sense of the word, shall be totally prohibited, and there shall be no connection with secret combinations; (a secret combination is one whose initiatory ceremony or bond of union is a secret); and any member found connected with such society, shall be affectionately admonished by the preacher in charge, twice or thrice, and if such member does not desist in a reasonable time, he shall be notified to appear before the tribunal to which he is amenable; and if he still refuses to desist, he shall be expelled from the Church."

The eleventh general conference, which convened in Miltonville, O., in 1853,\* is marked by the vigorous progressive spirit which characterized all its proceedings. The missionary and publishing interests of the church received especial attention. As noticed elsewhere, the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society was organized; and a healthful aggressive spirit breathed into every department of the missionary enterprise. The Printing Establishment was removed from Circleville to Dayton, Ohio, and measures were adopted, looking toward an expansion of the field of its operations. These interests have, already,

\* The conference districts were represented as follows: *Pennsylvania*, J. Russel, A. Owen, J. C. Smith; *East Pennsylvania*, S. Dresback, S. Vonneida, J. A. Sand; *Miami*, H. Kumler, jr., J. Hill, J. Coons; *Virginia*, J. Markwood, J. Bachtel, G. B. Rimal; *Scioto*, J. Montgomery, H. Jones, M. Ambrose; *Alleghany*, J. B. Resler, S. S. Snyder, I. Potter; *White River*, J. T. Vardaman, D. Stover, W. W. Richardson; *Iowa*, F. R. S. Byrd, A. A. Sellers; *Muskingum*, S. Weaver, E. Slutts, C. Carter; *Sandusky*, J. Lawrence, J. C. Bright, A. Biddle; *Illinois*, J. A. Kenoyer, J. Terrel; *Wabash*, J. Griffith, A. Wimsett, J. P. Shuey; *St. Joseph*, J. B. Slight, J. Fetherhuff, J. Surran; *Indiana*, J. Lopp, L. S. Chittenden, D. Shuck.

received attention in this history; and we need only refer to them now. One matter, however, relating to the delicate question of water-baptism, must be noticed. At an early period in the conference, a resolution was introduced by Mr. Kumler, which, in the estimation of some of the members of the conference, leaned a little to the Pedo-Baptist side of the question; and a brisk, though good-natured, debate sprang up. Happily, however, before the question was pressed to a vote, bishop Glossbrenner offered the following substitute to Mr. Kumler's resolution: "Resolved, that in the opinion of this conference it is contrary to the spirit of the United Brethren church for a minister to speak lightly, either publicly or privately, of any form of baptism practiced by his brethren." This resolution, which breathes the spirit of Christianity, and is in entire harmony with the discipline of the United Brethren in Christ, was heartily endorsed by the conference. Good sense and good Christianity, alike forbid the endorsement of the extreme views entertained either by the Baptists or the Pedo-Baptists. Of another subject, which occupied some attention in the ninth, eleventh, and twelfth quadrennial conferences, a passing notice must be given.

United Brethren, in all periods of their history, have been remarkably free from doctrinal controversies; and hence they have produced few theological works, have been entirely free from schisms, and their time and means have been devoted to the diffusion of experimental and practical religion. Yet they have not *entirely* escaped what Mr. Beecher has very well denominated "the conflict of ages." As early as 1834, the subject of depravity was occasionally discussed in the columns of the Religious Telescope; but it was not until about the year 1845 that any considerable attention was called to it. At the general conference for that year, a motion was made to strike out the word "depravity" from the question asked of candidates for the ministry, beginning, "What is your knowledge of faith," etc. This motion was not sustained. After this little brush, for such it was, the subject was allowed to slumber until 1853. Into the general conference of that year, a motion was introduced by Mr. Potter, to strike out the word "depravity" in the question already referred to, and to place in the list of questions to candidates, the following new question: "Do you believe in the doctrine of natural, hered-



itary, total depravity, as held by our church?" This proposition called forth quite a lengthy and exciting discussion, after which Mr. P.'s question, modified to read thus: "Do you believe in the doctrine of natural, hereditary, complete depravity?" was adopted, and inserted in the discipline, accompanied by the following explanation, offered by bishop Glossbrenner, and placed in a foot note. "1. By depravity is meant, not guilt, nor liability to punishment, but the absence of holiness, which unfits man for heaven. 2. By natural, it is meant that man is born with this absence of holiness. 3. By hereditary, is meant that this unholy state is inherited from Adam. 4. By total or complete, is not meant that a man or a child can not become more unholy; or that he is irrecoverably unholy; nor that he is a mass of corruption; but that this absence of holiness must be predicated of all the faculties and powers of the soul."

This action did not give very general satisfaction, especially in some portions of the west, and a brisk theological skirmish was kept up, in many places, during the four years which intervened between the general conferences of 1853 and 1857; and, when the last-named conference convened, preparations

were made, on both sides, for a pitched battle. Fortunately, the piety and good sense of the conference enabled them to adopt, by a unanimous vote, a substitute for the question of 1853, which has been entirely satisfactory to the church, and which put an end at once,—it is hoped for all time to come,—to controversy on this confessedly difficult question, in the United Brethren church. The question, as adopted by the conference, and as it now stands in the discipline, reads thus: "Do you believe that man, abstract of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is fallen from original righteousness, and is not only entirely destitute of holiness, but is inclined to evil, and only evil, and that continually; and that, except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God?"

The thirteenth general conference assembled at Westerville, O., in 1861, at the opening of the great war for the Union. It was remarkable for the unity which characterized all its proceedings. Some changes were made in the discipline, one of which provides that ministers or members of the church, who violate the rule in relation to secret societies shall be dealt with as in other cases of immorality; and a case of impeachment

of an annual conference,—the first in the history of the church,—was tried. That it may be properly understood, a few facts must be stated.

Just before the Sandusky conference met to hold her annual session for 1857, it was rumored that some ministers of that body were Freemasons. That such might be detected, if in the conference, by resolution each member was asked, publicly, on his examination,—“Are you a member of any secret society?” To this question every member of the conference present answered in the negative. However, soon after the rise of the conference it was ascertained that several of the itinerant ministers of the conference were Freemasons! This intelligence produced a painful sensation in the conference, and throughout the church.

At the succeeding annual conference, the ministers implicated were called to account, and they all admitted that they had joined the Freemasons. As the question of guilt was settled, upon the acknowledgment of the parties implicated, the conference adopted the following paper, as a guide in the disposition of the cases before it:

This conference learns with deep regret that several of its members have, within a recent period, and in plain violation of our discipline



and the Holy Scriptures, become Freemasons. This gives us unmingled pain; and the report of this defection in the ministry of this conference has occasioned much uneasiness throughout the church, tending greatly to destroy confidence in the integrity of our ministry. We are more than ever convinced of the evils of secret societies—of their utter incompatibility with the principles of our church, and with vital Christianity; and we are determined, by the help of God, kindly and humbly, but firmly and boldly, to enforce our discipline in relation to all secret combinations, in this conference, and in all the churches committed to our care.

As it respects the ministers of our conference who have become Freemasons, our condemnation of what they have done—we say it in sorrow and in love—is unqualified. We can find no apology for it. The fact that they had committed unto them, by their brethren, important trusts and responsibilities, heightens the offense. It can not be too much deplored that watchmen, set for the defense of the church, should be the first to betray it into the hands of its enemies. A pure, truthful, and reliable ministry is essential to the safety and prosperity of Zion.

But it is not in our hearts to deal harshly with our brethren; and, in case they can give satisfaction to this conference, such as the gospel requires, we are ready to receive it as the same gospel directs. In order that we may arrive at a just and satisfactory conclusion, we adopt, as a rule to be applied to all the cases in question before us, the following:

These brethren implicated, who frankly confess that they have committed a grievous wrong against the church, and against God, by becoming Freemasons, and that they are heartily sorry for that wrong, and who promise that they will have no connection with Freemasonry, neither giving nor answering its signs, or grips, or pass-words, entering its lodges, or in any way avail themselves of its benefits, directly or indirectly, and who assure the conference that they do now heartily endorse our discipline on secrecy, and will honestly observe it, and enforce it in their administration, and support it by their influence, shall be forgiven—received to our hearts as brethren, and commended to the confidence and love of the church.

Before the conference closed, all the ministers implicated complied with the requirements of this paper, were forgiven, and

appointed, as usual, to fields of labor. Subsequently, however, dissatisfaction was expressed with the action of the conference, and, as a result, an impeachment of the conference was instituted. It is needless to say that the action of the conference was sustained by the general conference.

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#### STATE OF THE CHURCH.

The reader will indulge a few concluding thoughts on the present state of the church. In their quadrennial address to the general conference of 1861, the superintendents, who have the means of obtaining the most exact and thorough information on the subject, say: "On reviewing the labors of the past four years, we are happy to state that the Lord has been with us. Our progress has been steady and general. Peace prevails throughout the church. Our ministers and members manifest a disposition to 'walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing,' and thus maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." The following facts, selected from the annual conference charts, will exhibit, to

some extent, the progress made within the last four years. We have now

Preaching places,	-	-	-	5,204
Classes,	-	-	-	3,901
Sabbath-schools,	-	-	-	1,534
Meeting-houses,	-	-	-	1,049
Itinerant preachers,	-	-	-	725
Local preachers,	-	-	-	640
Members,	-	-	-	94,453

A comparison of these statistics with those of 1857, shows a gain in four years, of preaching places, 1,313; classes, 1,285; members, 33,054; itinerant preachers, 226; local preachers, 223; meeting-houses, 276; Sabbath-schools, 525. These facts indicate a very rapid and healthful growth.

Again, a comparison of the statistics of 1860-'61, with those of 1850-'51, indicates the same fact. It is only necessary to state that the whole number of members in the church in 1850-'51, scarcely reached 40,000. In 1860-'61, the number, as already seen, is 94,453, showing a gain, during the decade of 54,453. For some statistical details the reader is referred to the table at the end of this volume.

The United Brethren in Christ are still a humble, and zealous people. Their houses



of worship are plain and substantial. No minister in the church, as far as the author is informed, has fallen into the prevalent practice of reading his sermons; and the practice would hardly be tolerated in any congregation. United Brethren ministers are generally well-informed men, called from the field or the workshop. They are good extemporaneous speakers, industrious, not unwilling to labor with their hands when duty requires it, and successful evangelists.

Choirs have not been established in any congregation; and the general conference of 1861, without a dissenting vote, adopted a resolution, prohibiting their introduction. Organs, or other instruments of music, would not be tolerated in the public worship of God. In their assemblies the men and women usually sit apart; and all join in singing with the Spirit, if not always with the understanding also.

That the Christian church is composed only of those who have been born again, and now live by faith on the Son of God, is a universal conviction. Any one who attends their love-feast meetings, or listens to their prayers and sermons, or witnesses their labors with seekers of religion at the mourner's bench

or anxious seat, will be convinced of this fact. THE LIFE OF GOD IN THE SOUL is still the great thought with the United Brethren in Christ.

At the close of the general conference of 1861, one of the bishops said: "The fact has been developed here, that on all important questions,—*on all great moral questions, this church is a unit.* Toward this perfect unity, the tendency has been constant for the last ten years. In this God has a purpose. We are, perhaps, yet in the school. Let us walk humbly and softly before God. Let us beware lest the vessel be marred in the hands of the potter. God has had a purpose in raising up this people, but there is danger that the vessel be marred. Let us be watchful."

"O may we ever walk in him,  
And nothing know beside;  
Nothing desire, nothing esteem,  
But Jesus crucified."

## SOME STATISTICS FOR 1860-'61.

Conference Districts.	Preaching places.	Classes.	Members.	Itinerant preachers.	Local preachers.	Meeting-houses.	Sabbath schools.
Alleghany.....	228	181	5,725	33	20	61	70
Auglaize.....	202	180	3,958	23	24	58	80
California.....	20	6	75	2			
Canada.....	50	33	703	10	7	6	14
East Pennsylvania.....	249	173	4,555	28	39	64	53
Erie.....	322	246	4,075	58	21	48	83
Des Moines*.....	309	218	4,393	30	42	3	51
German.....	130	100	1,218	19	11	26	26
Illinois.....	215	171	4,169	30	37	18	79
Indiana.....	203	158	4,958	26	38	48	52
Iowa.....	180	129	2,605	33	30	10	51
Kansas.....	95	50	928	12	10	4	34
Kentucky.....	20	12	400	1	1	8	
Lower Wabash.....	221	146	3,745	26	18	24	33
Miami.....	100	111	3,995	25	41	70	68
Michigan.....	176	122	1,622	26	14	5	67
Minnesota.....	51	43	491	10			11
Missouri.....	80	58	1,001	8	6		
Muskingum.....	131	106	3,248	26	19	60	68
Nebraska.....	16	8	146	2	1		4
Massachusetts.....	20	16	100	4		1	6
Oregon.....	48	27	565	8	9	1	8
Parkersburg.....	128	90	2,210	14	9	23	25
Pennsylvania.....	188	114	5,114	30	27	61	49
Rock River.....	169	99	1,893	26	13	12	48
Sandusky.....	376	313	7,559	58	53	118	158
Scioto.....	298	259	6,944	36	33	137	126
St. Joseph.....	241	175	4,095	30	31	38	62
Tennessee (mission).....	8	6	120	1	1	1	2
Upper Wabash.....	202	144	3,694	20	27	32	46
Virginia.....	153	116	3,354	16	24	57	50
White River.....	167	139	4,197	23	25	50	50
Wisconsin.....	203	162	1,885	30	9	5	61

\* For 1859.



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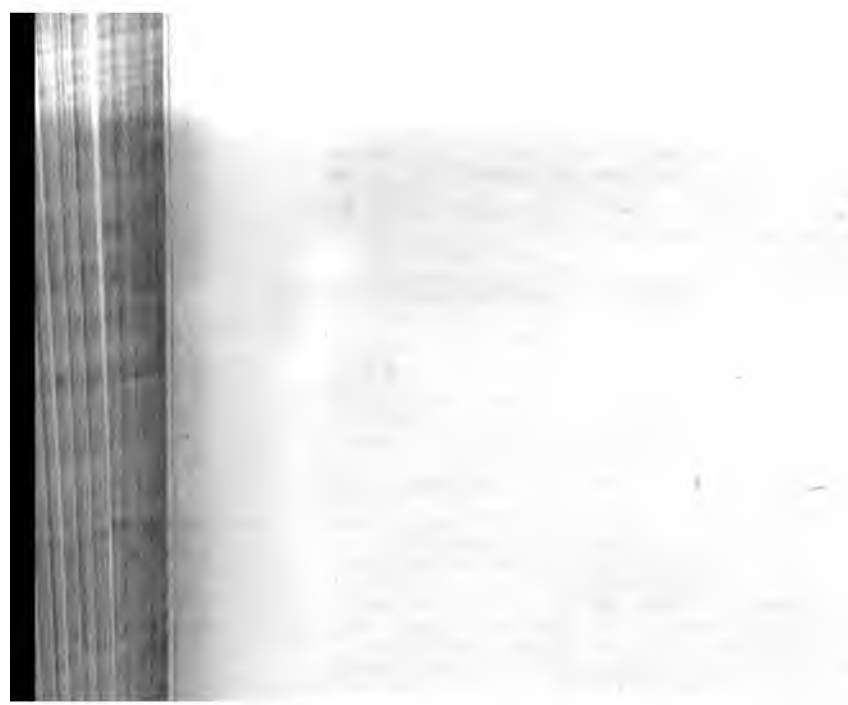
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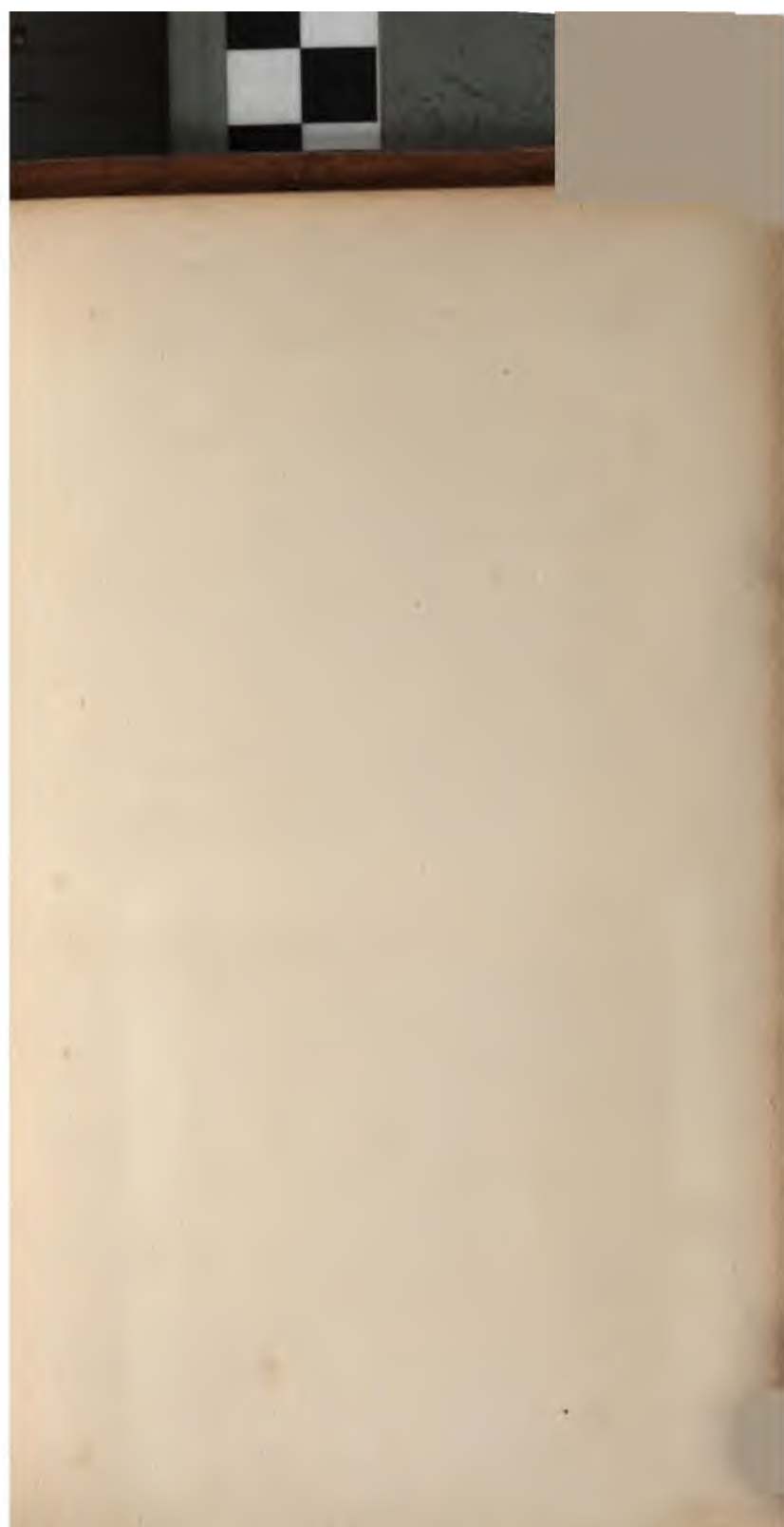


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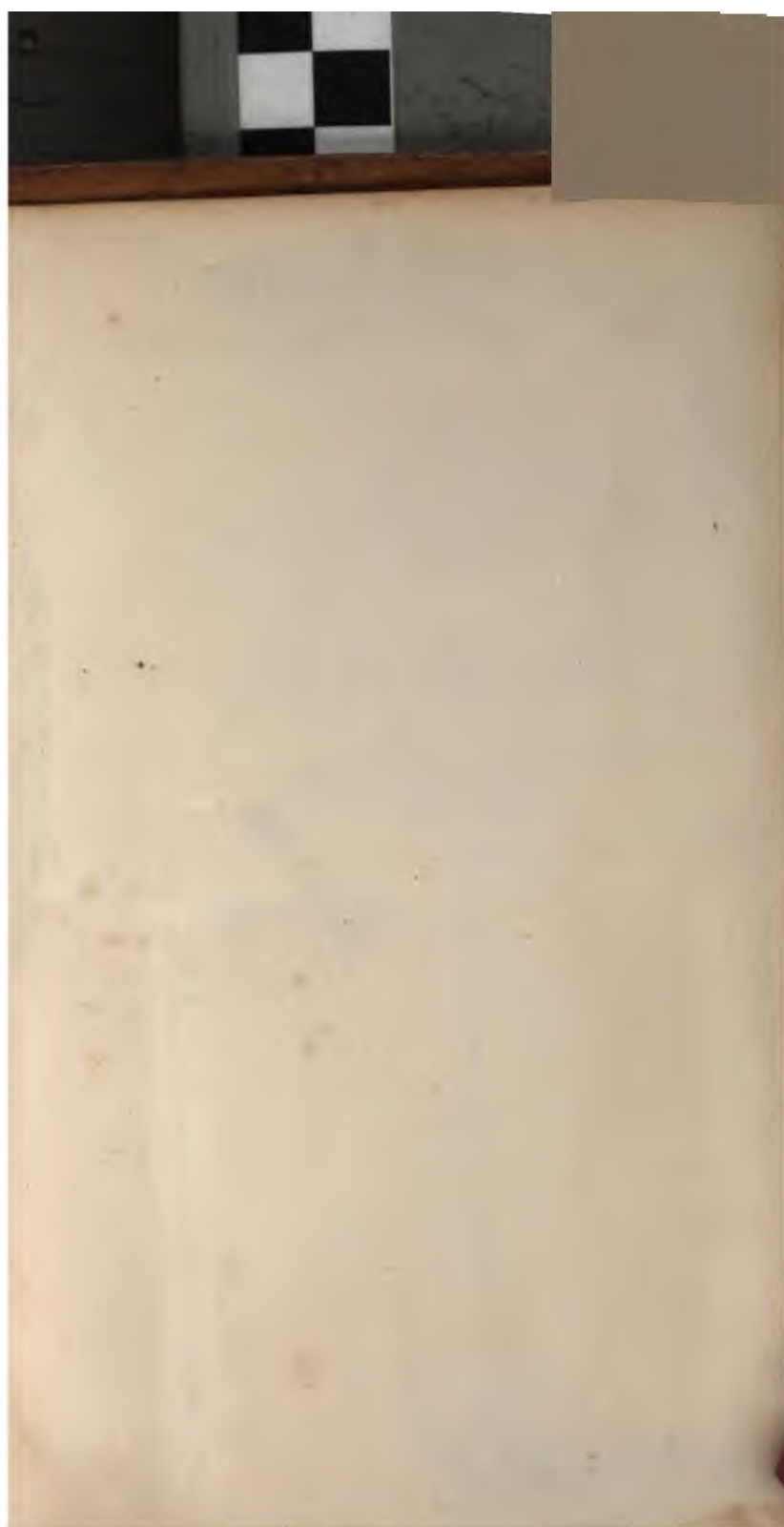
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